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FAITH



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FAITH



Faith

Andrea del Sarto

FAITH

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE GIBERGUES

Bishop of Valence

Sermons Preached at a Men's Retreat

From the French of the Third Thousand



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I

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF FAITH

Parati semper ad satisfactionem omni poscenti vos rationem de ea quæ in vobis est spe (Be ready always to satisfy every one that asketh you a reason of that hope which is in you).—1 *St. Peter* iii. 15.

THE question of faith has in all ages been one that most urgently presents itself to the human mind.

Faith touches the essential problems of life : problems concerning our origin, our duties, our sorrows, and our destiny ; eternal problems, which we must solve, if we wish to lead reasonable lives.

We cannot deny them ; to do so would be to deny ourselves. We cannot belittle them ; they are stronger than our contempt. They torment us unceasingly. We drive them from us, but they return. They pursue us, they sound in our ears, they bar our path, they rise before us like haunting spirits. We think we have annihilated them ; back they come, more disturbing than ever.

They are at the root of all ; of philosophy, history, science, law, literature, art, politics, social questions. They are closely allied to

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our intellectual and moral life, to the life and interests of the family and of society.

Faith, which provides the most definite solution to these momentous problems, is for us the first and most necessary of all questions, the most vital of all. Never, moreover, has this question been more pressing than to-day. Modern incredulity has violently assaulted faith, taking its weapons from science, the comparative study of religions, exegesis, and historical criticism. It has attacked faith at times with a hatred but poorly dissimulated beneath the courteous forms of dilettanteism.

Unbelievers have opposed science to faith; they have avowed the pretension of supplanting the latter by the former, of reducing all things to science—an untenable pretension, as common sense was quick to perceive, and to loudly proclaim “bankrupt.”

On the other hand, for a century past philosophers of the most diverse schools have felt the need of reverting to moral faith, and have been turning their attention to the subject. Amidst the profound disorder of men’s minds and an incredible confusion of ideas we find one rallying point: the preoccupation of duty and of faith.

But the majority of these philosophers misrepresent faith by isolating it and by divorcing it from reason. They exalt it only the more surely to destroy it.

However, there are men, and their number steadily increases, who are ever becoming more closely attached to the Catholic faith. They defend it with their whole intelligence and their whole heart, in their writings, their works, and

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by their deeds. They live by their faith and they propagate it.

Thus we each of us turn our attention to faith. All feel amidst the profound shocks which move us, and the social transformations in preparation, that the question of faith is of the first importance, and that all will depend upon its solution. The contest of minds, of will, and of all varying influences is more and more fully concentrated upon this point. Is it necessary, is it lawful to believe? What distinctive qualities must faith assume? This is the present question, urgent, vital above all others.

We will approach it neither as critics nor as philosophers, nor even as apologists. Christian apologetics has become more than ever necessary, but the object in view during a retreat is even more urgent. A retreat is directed to the heart and will as much as to the intelligence; it appeals to the soul, that is to say, to the whole man. It aims at virtue, which is superior to truth, because it is truth in action. The object of a retreat is to make you better.

It is—for of all those present almost all have faith—it is to strengthen your faith, to broaden it, to render it more active, more communicative, to cause it more thoroughly to penetrate your minds and your hearts, your lives and your deeds.

It is to make certain amongst your advance from a vague religiosity, often no more than a family tradition, a matter of form, from a purely sentimental faith to a serious and reasonable faith, worthy of a man and a Christian. It is to show to certain hesitating, undecided

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souls, scrupulous and timid by nature, and to others whose minds are too mathematical or too little enlightened in matters of religion, that they have faith without knowing it, or that they are within reach of it, and might with a slight effort, properly directed, attain to it.

It is to reassure those whose faith is troubled and uneasy, those who, amidst the contradictions and attacks that come from every side, feel at times disconcerted.

It is, finally—why should I hesitate to say so ?—it is to give faith to some who are really without it, either because they have a wrong idea of faith, which is often the case to-day, or because they have not known by what means to acquire it. It is, at least, to put them on the highway to faith, and to awaken that generous impulse which will lead them to their salvation.

This is my ambition ; I do not disguise it. If you find it vast, I too hold that opinion, more strongly even than you yourselves ; yet I neither shrink from this admission, nor from the magnitude of the task ; for, like the marvellous instruments which enable man to transmit his thoughts to a distance, the priest is only the voice and the agent of God : *tanquam Oco exhortante per nos*.*

Before speaking in detail of the many and serious duties which faith imposes upon you, especially at the present day, it is necessary to consider faith in itself. You could neither understand what it demands of you nor its compelling force, unless you already know what faith is. So we must first of all analyse the *nature* of faith and study its *psychology*. And

* 2 Cor. v. 20.

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thus prepared it will be easy to trace the plan of your obligations.

In what follows I will set aside all question of the supernatural element of faith, and of the part therein belonging to grace and prayer according to the doctrine of the Church. This remark is essential, and I beg of you to bear it in mind, that you may not mistake nor misrepresent my words. I shall not speak of faith as a theological virtue, but as a human act. I shall consider the act of faith in its human psychology and its natural expression, independently of all the aid which God brings to it in order to make it a supernatural act and a theological virtue, the principle and foundation of salvation.*

* I do not, therefore, make a theological analysis of the act of faith, but a simple analysis of the mechanism of the interior faculties which are involved in the act. I assume that it is fully admitted that faith is a gift of God, a supernatural virtue. Even the desire for faith is a *grace*, therefore a gift of God. The awakening of faith, as well as its perfecting, proceeds from grace, and we cannot attribute the slightest commencement of supernatural faith to our own unaided merits. For indeed faith would cease to be a grace were it the reward of our merits. To believe we must will to believe; and before we can will to believe God must come to our aid. He awakens our wills, and after making us ready He continues to help us.

This Divine action does not do away with the part played by the *intelligence*, but the motives of credibility might be admitted in the absence of faith, for faith implies the acceptance of the entire supernatural order, and for that grace is necessary. To make an act of faith is not merely to admit a revealed proposition, but to accept it on God's authority.

This Divine action does not set aside *liberty*, but guides and strengthens it. If grace suppressed

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Now I claim that faith, thus understood, considered in its general and essential nature, is so indispensable to man that we may assert it to be his law: here I speak of the moral man. The material man depends upon science, and of him I have nothing to say. It is of the moral man I say: Faith is the law of his nature.*

However strange, however novel this affirmation may seem to you, *that faith is the law of man's nature*, I undertake to justify it and to show its whole truth, by proving that it answers perfectly to what, in the terms of a certain philosophy, we should call *objective reality*.

Moreover, it is from this very definition that I shall deduce the practical conclusions and the very serious duties which faith will hold for you.

Faith in general, and Catholic faith in particular, if considered in its natural psychology, *is the law of the moral man*: such will be the fundamental idea, the centre of unity, as it were, of all that follows.

free-will, faith would no longer be commanded, whereas to believe is a duty.

There is obviously a mystery in this interpenetration of the Divine and human actions. In reality, there are not two complete and separate actions, one from God proffering aid, and the other of man refusing or accepting the assistance offered him. Grace and nature act as two incomplete powers which, by combining, form a single principle of action. In the act of faith all is God's and all is man's, in the sense that the Divine activity and the human activity, although really distinct, cannot be separately determined.

* Faith is the law of man's nature for two reasons: 1, because it is so in conformity with his nature and adapts itself so perfectly thereto that it appears clearly made for him: our first two discourses will establish this point. 2, because man cannot attain to his end save by faith, as we shall presently prove.

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Do you not already see at a glance the depth and the consequences of this idea ?

Every being here below has a law and an end ; scientists and positivists acknowledge it, evidence and common sense proclaim it.

The purpose of science should be to deduce and formulate the law of beings, arriving thereat by the observation of phenomena. True science is the sum of the known laws of nature.

But what is the law of a being ? It is the mode according to which it acts. It is, for that being, the only means of attaining its end, the only path which leads to its destiny. The law and the end of a being are mutually adapted and proportioned, are inseparably united, setting that being in its true place and making it play its proper part in creation.

Now man has his law like all other beings, because he has, like all others, a destiny and an end. But while the law of inanimate beings and creatures without reason must necessarily control them, the law of man, he being a reasoning creature, is left to his free-will ; it morally obliges him without coercing him. It forces itself upon him, because it comes from God ; but it respects his liberty in order to safeguard his morality.

But notice that if a man departs from his law by an act of his free-will, he at once loses his way, he takes the wrong path, he misses his destiny.

Thus, if I prove that faith is the law of man's nature, it will necessarily follow that man can only attain to his end and fulfil his mission here below by means of faith. The truth of faith, its necessity and its excellence, proceed logically from its essential nature.

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You will see that this method of demonstration, entirely modern in its procedure, will in addition have the advantage of being irrefutable, because it is founded upon the law of man and on undeniable facts.

To assure ourselves that faith is the law of the moral man, we must first of all determine that law. In so doing I will follow the method of science.

Every being is obviously organised with a view to its end : and as the purpose of its law is to conduct it to that end, its law must necessarily be in conformity with its structure and therein recorded.

The scientist analyses a body, he reduces it to its simple elements and thus discovers the laws according to which the molecules are mutually attracted and combined, placed and ordered. This analysis of the constituent elements of a body enables the scientist to formulate the law of that body.

Let us apply this method to the human soul, to the moral man ; let us analyse his nature and the elements which compose it, so that we may obtain a clear knowledge of the law of his being.

Now the human soul is composed of three distinct elements, namely, *reason*, *heart*, and *will*, which constitute its essential mechanism. The law of man must respect all three, must disregard none, and destroy none. The process which guides man to his moral destiny, which will be his law and lead him to his end, must bring into action the whole of the human soul.

A philosopher of the critical school, M. Renouvier, has called attention to this fact. According to him, a complete conviction is :

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"that which proceeds together from the reason, heart, and will. None of the three," he says, "can be omitted from certitude."* It could not be better expressed.†

The law of man's being must not ignore any of the elements which constitute man's soul. If indeed the discovery and possession of moral truth were to depend on an undeniable vision, as in the case of physical or mathematical data, this process would not be suited to the needs of the soul, which would no longer be free, but oppressed by the evident fact.

If the moral law were to depend solely upon our free-will, it would no longer be a law imposed by the Author of our being, but a caprice. For as we are dependent creatures our law cannot depend upon ourselves.

Finally, if the law of our being depended only upon the blind instincts of the heart, however lofty these might be, it would slight our intelligence and our liberty, and would confound our activities, with the fatal determinism of animals.

* Ollé-Laprune, "Certitude Morale," fourth edition, pp. 316, 129-131, 134-136, 63.

† This shows the fundamental error of all those, rationalists or intellectualists, call them what you will, who in the research for moral truth attribute to reason not only a predominant part but an exclusive one.

Doubtless Pascal, Maine de Biran, and others have exaggerated the rôle played by the will and the heart in this question of moral certainty, but at least they have proved, by the force of their genius, the inability of reason, unsubmissive and alone, to attain to truth. Cardinal Newman, without going to such lengths, has admirably pointed out that man is not made up of reason alone, and that moral certitude may be reached by other means.

What we need, what is evidently the fundamental law of our constitution, is a process which depends upon the triple concourse of reason, heart, and will, and which enables us finally, in the noble words of Plato, *to go towards truth with our whole soul.*

If we deny "the intervention of the affections and the will," continues M. Renouvier, we forget that "it is the whole man, and not the intelligence alone," that affirms.* And he reproaches Kant, by the separation of theoretical from practical reason, with having made two men of one. "We must," he adds, "correct Kant," and "in his name unite the two reasons in order to establish certitude."

So it follows that we must never destroy man's unity if we would seek to discover his law. We shall arrive at the true doctrine of moral life only if we are careful not to ignore nor reject the reason, the affections, or the will; only, in a word, if we "go towards truth with our whole soul"; this is beyond all doubt, and I make bold to say in keeping with science.

Here, then, is the essential character, the obvious sign of the law of man's being: it must not diminish, nor divide, nor mutilate man's nature; it must bring into action the whole man, his reason, heart, and will, his whole soul. Such is the method best suited to our nature and which appears obviously to be our law in the pursuit of our destiny.

It now only remains to inquire whether faith is indeed this process, which is necessarily and wholly in conformity with our nature; in other words, if *reason, heart, and will all play their*

* Ollé-Laprune, pp. 317-318.

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legitimate part in the act of faith ; if, in short, the psychological act of faith is the human act in the full force of the term, into which the moral man enters with his whole soul.

If faith corresponds to the nature of the moral man, if it adapts itself so well to him that it seems made for him, then faith is evidently the law of man's being. He may trust to it, it will lead him legitimately and surely to his goal.

Let us therefore examine whether, as in agreement with our opening words, Catholic faith in its natural action corresponds in every way to the analysis which we have just made of the essential law of the moral man.

Firstly—and for the present we will confine ourselves to this consideration—has reason its part in the act of faith ?

“ No,” reply the rationalists, each in his own way.

Some, like Kant and Fichte, absolutely separate faith and reason, by placing the object of faith outside the conditions of thought. Consequently their doctrine is merely a sort of moral mysticism, which opens wide the depths of scepticism.

Others, like Hamilton and Mansel, place reason and faith in absolute opposition, the object of faith being contrary to the laws of thought.

Others again, like Herbert Spencer, push the divorce between knowledge and belief to its furthest limits. Belief is pure only when it is not knowledge. While recognising a fundamental need to believe, and according a vast importance to faith, they prohibit all effort to solve the great and fundamental mystery.*

* Ollé-Laprune.

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And, finally, Positivism, admitting no more than science, declares that moral convictions are purely personal and subjective, and explains them solely by imagination and sentiment.

All these systems which refer faith to a blind and natural instinct, to a sentiment, to a creation of the imagination or the heart, pronounce judgment upon themselves. Leaving reason completely on one side, they mistake the constitution of man, they divide his nature, they violate the law of his being. Faith, as they conceive it, is evidently not the law of man; it must be rejected because it is placed either above or below reason, always outside of it.

The Catholic Church does not accept the exaggerated rank which some attribute to faith; it rejects the unworthy part which others would give to it. The Church places faith neither so high nor so low.

It does not isolate faith from reason in order to exalt or abase it. It takes the first of man's faculties into account, by affirming the rational element of faith.

St. Peter writes to Christians that they should be "ready always to satisfy every one that asketh you a reason of that hope which is in you." *

St. Thomas says that "the believer would not believe if he did not see that he must believe." † The Council of the Vatican affirms with particular insistence the necessary part of the reason in faith. ‡

* 1 *St. Peter* iii. 15.

† *St. Thomas*, 2a 2æ q. 1a, art. 4.

‡ *Constit. Dogm. de la Foi Cath.*, Chap III., can. 3d.

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Do these affirmations correspond with reality ? Has reason its legitimate place in the Catholic act of faith ?

Unbelievers deny that it has. There is no subject more hackneyed than that of the supposed opposition of reason and faith ; but nevertheless nothing is farther from being proved.

I might in the first place cite the learned Catholics who have existed in all ages. I well know that men are not always logical, nor consistent with themselves. It is, none the less, true that in every century these Catholic scholars—and they have been innumerable—have seen the difficulties like ourselves, often more fully than we do, but this has in no way prevented their giving their full adhesion to the teaching of the Church. You cannot suspect the sincerity of so many honourable men, and you are bound to recognise that a man like Pasteur, for instance, when he made his Easter communion in spite of the objections of scepticism, must have found faith reasonable.

But here is a fitting reply. Can you cite a positive scientific truth which is in manifest opposition to the teachings of faith ? If you cannot your argument is untenable.

Now there are three principal points on which it has been attempted to establish an opposition between reason and faith. Let us examine them. Or, rather, as they have been examined, with undeniable authority, in a recent address on the " Difficulties of Belief,"* it will be

* Address by M. Brunetière, delivered the 9th May, 1904, at Amsterdam, before the Society " Foi et Science."

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sufficient to sum up the conclusions of this remarkable study.

Science affirms that the laws of nature are invariable, and faith affirms the fact of miracles ; there, it is said, is the first contradiction.

I reply, that even should science prove its assertion—and it has not done so—science places itself apart from God, a stranger to Him ; and that it is quite possible that in themselves the laws of nature are invariable. But it is no less evident that if God exists He is free and all-powerful, and that He may, when it pleases Him, change the laws of nature. Science and faith assume different points of view ; there is no opposition between their statements.

In the second place it is alleged that faith is founded on the Scriptures, and that modern exegesis has destroyed the confidence once felt in the Scriptures. Here we find proposed a new point of opposition.

The learned speaker commences by distinguishing from exegesis what a Protestant pastor recently called “ the impertinence and presumption of certain exegetical juggleries,” often inspired by philosophic theories which have nothing to do with science. Then, going to the root of the matter, he shows that exegesis has come to admit the authenticity of the Gospels, the historical certainty of the facts of the life of Jesus, and the priority of the Church to the Gospels. Is not this also the assertion of Catholic faith ? Then where is the contradiction ? Many difficulties of detail remain to be solved ; but on the whole there is agreement.

The speaker concludes that the difficulties in the way of belief which arise from exegesis

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"are by no means insurmountable," and he adds: "If we wish to be sincere, we must admit, when they are invoked, that they are not the real difficulties. . . and would not be difficulties at all, or scarcely, if there were not others of quite a different nature, which lurk in their shadow."

Lastly, men have sought to find a final opposition between science and faith in the history of comparative religions, notably with regard to Buddhism.

It is thus expressed. Catholicism affirms its "transcendency." Now history shows us, in Buddhism, a religious development "entirely human," and yet the same in kind and nature as that of Christianity. Hence Christianity is no longer transcendent: there is the contradiction.

The speaker replies that a deeper study of Buddhism during the last fifty years has revealed the essential points of difference which divide it from Christianity. Buddhism is but "a system of egoism," intended not for the masses but for an intellectual aristocracy, and "stricken, moreover, by a premature decay." The difference is thus "in the doctrine itself," in the historical development and "in the spirit of either teaching"; which suffices to resolve the difficulty, and to do away with the supposed opposition between Catholic affirmation and the affirmation of history.

Thus it is proved, by three striking examples, that there is no contradiction, nor opposition, between Catholic faith and scientific reason.

But I must go further, for we have as yet but a negative solution. I must now prove that reason has its *positive* place in the *Catholic act of faith*.

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Now this is true in two senses. Reason intervenes : 1, in the *preparation and formation* of the act of faith ; 2, in the *study and understanding* of the *dogmas* of faith.

Reason co-operates in the *formation* of faith in the first instance by giving proofs of the existence of God and of the Divine veracity ; then reason bears witness to the fact of Revelation and proves that God has spoken. It demonstrates the divinity of Jesus Christ and the infallibility of the Church. These are what we call the arguments or motives of credibility. Reason is here in its own domain, in full possession of its rights.

These motives of credibility, which, in the noble words of Cardinal Pius, "give supernatural Revelation its access to reason and its place in history," are very numerous,* whence are drawn different methods of apologetics, all perfectly rational, which we may reduce to three.

There are people who consider the Church at first as a vast society, whose human authority inspires them with confidence. They note its antiquity and its origin, and the extraordinary manner, contrary even to the ordinary means of propagating human ideas, in which it has developed and established itself in the world. They see adversaries striving to destroy it, having on their side all the natural forces : power, wealth, intelligence, and numbers. They see the illustrious characters, the scholars, the saints, the martyrs, and the heroes of sacrifice, devotion, and goodness which it has raised up

* Synod. instruction on the First Const. Dogm. of the Vatican, conc. XXVIII.

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in its midst. They see the admirable works of justice and charity which it has produced, and the incomparable influence which it has exercised upon civilisation. Then the Church appears to them to be humanly worthy of faith, and on the other hand to be visibly assisted by God, and therefore unable to affirm aught but the truth, for God does not protect a lie.*

This method of reasoning has a solid foundation and is perfectly just.†

Those of whom I speak receive the Gospel in all security at the hands of the Church, and so guided find therein the rational proofs of the divinity of Jesus Christ and of the existence of an infallible authority established by Him. Then only do they replace a purely human belief by a belief founded upon the Divine word, and they believe what the Church may henceforth teach them because it is the Church of God and speaks in His name.

This first method is obviously reasonable and legitimate: it is the ancient method, that of St. Augustine and of Bossuet.‡ It has lost nothing of its soundness. We are continually making acts of confidence on the word and authority of men, acts which we regard as perfectly reasonable, and which have infinitely less support than the rational act of confidence required by this first method.

The second method of apologetics is still more rational, in the precise meaning of the word.

* De Broglie, "Fondements Intellectuels de la Foi Chrétienne," pp. 24-25.

† The Church certifies this in the Council of the Vatican.

‡ P. Largent, "La Foi," pp. 17-18.

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It sets aside the human authority of the Church in order to rely solely upon the Gospels. It considers them first of all as a human book, and endeavours to establish, by the ordinary methods of historical criticism, their rights to our confidence, their veracity, and their genuineness. Resting on this solid groundwork it seeks in the Gospels, in the affirmations of Jesus Christ, in His teachings and character, in His miracles and His institutions, the foundations of faith, the proofs of the divinity of Jesus Christ and the infallibility of the Church.

This method of demonstration is rigorous, irreproachable from the point of view of logic, and entirely modern ; in a way it is scientific in character. Historical discoveries and the progress of exegesis have only strengthened it. But it is not accessible to all ; it is reserved for the learned.

The Abbé de Broglie, in one of his last works,* after expounding the two foregoing methods, mentions a third, which is open to all those possessed of good-will, and to minds of every description.

It consists in confronting the entire fact of Christianity, considered from its most remote antecedents, in the prophecies and the history of the peoples of Israel down to the present day. "We have here," says the Abbé de Broglie, "a whole series of proofs, some of which pertain to history, others to ethics, to the emotions of the human heart, all of which converge toward the idea that this great fact of Christianity is Divine and supernatural. This new method

* "Fondements Intellectuels de la Foi."

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consists in seeking out and bringing together all the different proofs of Christianity in order to show in a general way that Christianity can only come from God."

This method has the immense advantage, especially for our modern minds, of being positive in the fullest sense of the word. It is certain that Christianity has played a unique part and held an extraordinary place in the world. Unbelievers admit this. Cournot, a Positivist, has used these very words. "Candidly, the religion which our fathers have handed down to us is quite apart and unlike any other. It occupies, in the history of the civilised world, a unique position, without equal or counterpart." Renan himself, in spite of his deliberate determination to liken the facts of Christianity to the facts found in all histories, constantly admits that he is confronted by something "which has been seen but once," an ἀπαξλέγομεγος.

Now, if the fact of Christianity is unique, without equal or counterpart, how can we fail to see that it is transcendent and Divine? Otherwise we must exclude God from the world.

This method, as the Abbé de Broglie truly remarks, "is applied unconsciously by almost everybody. That which sustains the faith of the majority of men is far less a particular fact . . . than a certain combination of facts which lay hold of the soul and cause us to say: I believe!" *

This method, moreover, varies with different minds, one being struck with this aspect of the question, and another with that.

* "Syn. instr. concerning the principal errors of the present times," XI.

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"The motives of credibility," said Cardinal Pius, "are always offered to the Christian in proportion to the just demands of his reason."

Certain, like Frederic Bastiat, are struck by the extraordinary knowledge of men and societies manifested by the Gospels, and they adore the God who alone could penetrate so profoundly the mysteries of the human soul.

Others, like Jean de Muller, have studied the laws of history, and have seen the hand of God in the establishment and propagation of Christianity.

Some, like Le Play, have passed in review the peoples of Europe, and have perceived that religion has been the indispensable support of social prosperity: from this fact they have deduced its truth and its divinity.

Others, again, have thought as Augustin Thierry wrote to Père Gratry: "I am a wearied rationalist who submits to the authority of the Church. I see the facts, I see in history the manifest necessity of a divine and visible authority for the development of the life of the human species. Now, all that stands outside of Christianity does not count. Moreover, all that is outside the Catholic Church is without authority. All sects are but the neglect, the contempt, the negation of history. Therefore the Catholic Church is the authority I seek, and I submit myself to it, I believe what it teaches me. I receive the Credo."*

Others—I will not name them, they are still living—have as philosophers followed the example set by Augustin Thierry as historian. They have found that the "need to believe,

* Gratry, "Conn. de l'Ame," Préface, T. I., p. 27.

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inseparable from the very notion of man, necessarily implies the existence of an authority which determines belief, or, rather, to put it more clearly, which maintains it unaltered from age to age, which under all circumstances frees it from the arbitrary action of individual opinion, and which refers it as often as necessary to its principle." *

They have seen that Catholicism is essentially social, that it alone can explain and give true meaning to the three fundamental ideas of liberty, equality, and fraternity, and give life to democracy; thus they have perceived its divinity.

Others have found the way of light and belief in the problem of suffering, which Catholicism alone could explain, by revealing the existence of a "blessed suffering."

Others have progressively acquired faith because it has explained life to them. They have become believers through the ever-increasing sense of responsibility—which we incur when we exercise an influence over others. They have effected their "evolution" by the discovery of the influence of Christianity upon manners and societies, by the evidence of a morality in events, of a mysterious and immanent justice, fully revealed by Catholicism and proof of its divinity.†

All these conversions, all these instances of evolution, if you object to the word "conversion," are perfectly logical: they imply no blindness, nothing that is not justified, and in

* Brunetière, "Raisons Actuelles de Croire, Besoin de Croire."

† Jean Lionnet, "L'Evolution des Idées."

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conformity with sound reason and the legitimate employment of our intellectual faculties.

Even the faith of the most simple, of "the man in the street," holds nothing that is not in conformity with the dictates of reason. "There is a general appreciation of religion," says the Abbé de Broglie, "which is to be found in the most simple minds." They believe upon the word of a mother, a master, one in authority—and why? Because they perceive the moral worth of those who teach them the truth, and they tell themselves: "This doctrine has made them good, therefore it is good." They conclude unconsciously, but very justly, and according to the laws of strict reason, that the doctrine is true because of the excellence of its fruits; this is the application of the words of the Gospel: *ex fructibus eorum cognoscetis eos*.*

Because unreasoned, their instinct is far from being unreasonable. The faith of the simple rests upon the last of the methods enumerated.

Thus, to sum up, there are three methods of apologetics; all three are perfectly logical and rational, and give to intelligence its place and its proper office. Reason, in setting before us these various motives for belief, gives a solid and legitimate foundation to our faith.† Reason plays a considerable part in the preparation and formation of the Catholic act of faith.

But reason does not stop here. In the *study*

* By their fruits you shall know them.—*St. Matt.* vii. 16.

† This is precisely what the Vatican Council states, *Const. de fide*, c. 3: "In order, however, that the obedience of our faith may be in harmony with reason, God has chosen to add to the interior action of the Holy Ghost the exterior proofs of revelation . . ."

and understanding of the *dogmas* presented to us by faith, reason again intervenes. It has its active part, limited, doubtless, circumscribed and subordinate,—but always of importance.

In the first place, since reason has led us to say: “The Church is infallible,” reason must itself accept the teaching and dogmas of the Church. In so doing, and submitting thereto, it accomplishes a logical action.

Further, if Catholic dogmas are incomprehensible, they are not, however, entirely unintelligible. I will take an example. The Church tells me Jesus Christ is God. I do not understand *how*, in what way; the very root of the mystery is obscure. But I do very well understand that there is in Jesus Christ a union of the Divine nature and the human, which enables me to say of Jesus Christ both that He is God and He is man. In like manner concerning the Trinity, the Eucharist, and the other dogmas of faith. They are far from being meaningless to the reason. The proof lies in the practical consequences which proceed from them. Thus the Incarnation, the Redemption, the Eucharist, which are mysteries, prove God’s love for me in an evident and striking manner.

When I ask a rationalist: “Is God good? Show me proofs of the goodness of God,” he has no answer. But I, as a Catholic, say: “If God became man, if He died, if He is there in the Eucharist for me, it is because He loves me. I have before my eyes great and lasting proofs of His love. My reason grasps all this very well, at once amazed and overjoyed.” For twenty centuries past thousands of human

minds have been enraptured by the contemplation of these revealed teachings, and in them have found marvellous light concerning God, His unlimited power, His sovereign goodness, His infinite mercy. The intelligible side of dogma is therefore considerable.

Reason still further has its share in a certain demonstration of the truth of dogma. This I will explain. The believer receives dogma on the authority of the Church, speaking in the name of God. But it is permissible for him to seek the genesis and proof of dogma in the Scriptures, the Fathers, and in tradition, provided always that he does so with respect and submission, and not in the spirit of Descartes, for instance, giving free access to real scepticism. It is thus that theologians proceed. The Church teaches the Real Presence. The theologian takes the Gospel, studies the texts, and seeks directly, in the words of Jesus Christ, the proof of the institution of the Eucharist. He reads the writings of St. Paul, the works of the Fathers, and finds in the universal and constant belief since the earliest times, from the times of the Apostles, the confirmation of the faith of the Church.

Lastly, reason plays a final part: it defends the dogmas of the Church against heresy and unbelief. It resists all those who would attack, demolish, and corrupt faith. It refutes their objections, the so-called rational impossibilities which they oppose to our mysteries.

Here, above all, reason deserves the title given it of "*Ancilla fidei*." And how faithful, intelligent, active, and devoted it has proved itself, under the names of Athanasius, Augustine,

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Thomas Aquinas, Bossuet, and thousands of others.

Thus the lofty and admirable reason of so many great men has humbled itself before faith, and nobly served it, without in the least resigning its own legitimate character. The Church has welcomed and exalted reason. Reason has been enthroned in its councils; it has refuted heresy, has interpreted the Scriptures, and has developed the formularies of faith.* Its part has been the most magnificent, the most amazing in flexibility and submission, and at the same time in ardour and audacity, that the world has ever seen. Where has reason ever been more nobly employed, where has it been so wise, so judicious, so courageous and persevering?

No, indeed, Catholic faith is not contrary to reason; it neither oppresses nor stifles reason. It neither repels nor disdains reason. It calls upon reason, loves it, embraces it as a sister, a fellow-worker, a friend. It pursues reason and makes use of it as a faithful, devoted, and indispensable handmaid.

"Who will deny us reason?" cries Lacordaire. "Is it because we humble reason at the feet of faith, because we say that a finite light cannot equal an infinite light? But the sun is not God, yet it lights the world."†

To sum up, our reason enlightens us, aids us, and prepares us for faith. The Church would not wish an unreasonable faith.

* "Newman, *Psychologie de la Foi*," by H. Brémond, p. 200.

† Fourteenth Sermon at Notre Dame de Paris.

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And when we have found faith, reason does not desert us. It follows where faith leads, inseparably attached to it, with always its part to play, its mission to fulfil.

I have thus far sought only to prove that faith, regarded in its natural psychology, is the law of the moral man. Now the law of man must, as I have shown, correspond with man's nature ; it must be in full harmony with the component parts of that nature ; it must proceed from the whole man, neither omitting nor mutilating any one of the three elements which constitute the human soul ; it must be the simultaneous effort of the reason, the heart, and the will—in a word, of the whole soul.

Faith, as the Catholic Church conceives it, realises this first necessity, this first characteristic of the law of man. It is eminently reasonable ; and this is no small merit amidst so many other kinds of faith, of philosophic origin, which clash with reason, or totally reject it.

Thus my first point, the first halting-place in my demonstration, is reached, and it now remains to examine whether Catholic faith sufficiently and legitimately takes into account the *heart* and the *will* ; for on this condition alone will it truly appear to us to be the law of the moral man.

II

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF FAITH (*Continued*)

Illuminatos oculos cordis (The eyes of your heart enlightened).—*Epistle to the Ephesians*, i. 18.

WOULD it be a paradox to assert that if reason alone led us to believe, our faith would necessarily be open to suspicion? No, for such a faith would not be in conformity with the nature of the moral man, with the integral process which fully expresses the law of his being.

Faith founded upon reason alone could not be the law of man, because it would ignore two of the essential elements of his nature, his heart and his will.

Yet here is a truth which is constantly overlooked. Unconsciously you are more or less materialists: you want always to see with your eyes and touch with your hands, as though things pertaining to a higher sphere than that of the senses were not beyond the range of physical contact. You want at least a mathematical certainty, as though moral truths could be imposed by evidence or deduced by logic.

As you cannot have physical or mathematical certainties your faith is troubled. But this should not be. On the contrary, the very cause of your trouble should reassure you.

We could not have physical certitude, nor mathematical evidence of moral and religious

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truths, without absolutely destroying their essential character.

As Pascal so well expresses it, there are three orders of greatness: material greatness, intellectual greatness, and moral and religious greatness. The first is perceived by the senses, the second by reason alone, and the third by the whole soul.

It is the privilege and to the credit of moral and religious truths that they cannot be reached by this lowest means of sensible perception, nor even by the higher though still too narrow method employed by reason alone.

As it is here a question of the whole man, with his essential end and his immortal destiny, the law of man must be applicable in full, that his entire being may be made use of, and that he can grasp the truth only with his *whole* soul.

If, therefore, we find these characteristics in faith, if it demands the active service of our whole being, if the heart and the will are as necessary to it as is reason, then faith is evidently the true law of man, and you may, indeed you must, give yourself up without fear to its guidance. The demonstration which I have undertaken will be complete.

To better emphasise the part played by heart and will in the matter of faith, I will speak of it first in a general manner, as found in the total sum of human knowledge.

If we were to confine ourselves to that which reason alone teaches us we should confine ourselves to almost nothing. Apart from physical certitudes—which affect only external phenomena, not the essence of things which eludes

us—and beyond the deductions of mathematics and algebra, what do we know? *

Moreover, physical and mathematical sciences themselves, which are the special domain of pure reason, would become practically impossible without the constant intervention of the heart and will. These intervene and demand of the pupil a veritable act of natural faith in the word of the master. †

The pupil will learn nothing if he does not in the first instance rely upon the testimony of his master and allow himself to be guided by him; and even when he has himself completed a personal demonstration, he finds in the word of his master a confirmation of his certitude, a proof that he has not deceived himself.

Thus, already, even in pure science the will and heart have their necessary place. ‡

What do we find as we rise in the order of knowledge and mental operations? That the whole human soul enters always more fully into

* First principles themselves, axioms and evidences, do not, properly speaking, belong to reason, for reason accepts them on faith and bows before them, though unable to prove them. So there is already, at the origin of all knowledge, an evidence which imposes itself upon reason and makes it feel its dependence, an evidence which is a kind of natural faith.

† Whence the proverb: "Oportet addiscentem credere."

‡ "We find here," says Ollé-Laprune, "a secret and admirable harmony between the true end of man and his faculties. Man is, above all, a moral being: is it then surprising if we find hidden in the domain of pure reason something which is analogous to morality? The supremacy of the moral order thus reveals itself in the depths of the human being."—"Certitude Morale," fourth edition, p. 224.

the question, and that the part claimed by the heart and will must be ever greater.

Can you deny the influence of the heart and will in the judgments which you form? I do not speak of false, rash judgments, distorted and perverted by a culpable partiality, where envy, anger, and jealousy intervene, but of the judgments which you regard as most wise and reasonable.

How is it that a single action, the same event, makes so different an impression upon different witnesses? Each brings to his judgment his desires or his fears, his sympathies or his aversions, his preoccupations and his inclinations; each brings his personality, his life, his deeds, his whole soul, in a word—for we must always come back to that—and thus we find explained the infinite variety of opinions which arise.*

If we judged by reason alone this would not be so. The heart and the will do therefore influence our decisions. Moreover, we cannot judge without their assistance, for were we to await physical or mathematical proofs before declaring ourselves we should refrain altogether.

To judge impartially we must place our heart and will in certain dispositions. This is why, in the words of M. Renouvier, "We are each of us responsible for our opinions as for our moral actions, or rather an opinion in itself is, or should be a moral action."

Can you deny this same influence of the heart and will in our family relations, in our

* Ollé-Laprune, *id.*, pp. 74-78.—"Newman, *Psychologie de la Foi*," by H. Brémond, pp. 171-186.

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friendships, and all the certitudes which we find therein? The confidence of a child in its mother, of a friend in his friend, are proofs of this. In these instances are not our judgments and certitudes beyond the reach of pure reason? Because of the words which we hear, the expressions of countenance which we see, the various sensible manifestations which we perceive, we form conclusions as to the invisible and the insensible—conclusions concerning the hidden sentiments which shun our regard. "We feel the thrill of life in the touch of a hand, we see the soul reflected in a face, while in the eyes we read the secret of the heart, and we have confidence, we believe in affection, in friendship, in love." * We trust to evidence in order to attain to the invisible. Friendship is a great act of faith, in which the heart and will have an even larger share than reason, although they by no means exclude it.

Can you deny the influence of the heart and the will in philosophy, though ever boastful that it depends solely upon pure reason? Hark to its own admissions. According to Descartes, by means of the understanding we perceive, or conceive, only the ideas of things; but "to affirm, to deny, and to doubt, are different manners of willing," for they are different manners of forming determinations. Therefore the will intervenes directly the philosopher affirms, denies, or doubts; does not this prove its fundamental place in philosophy?

Do you wish for more recent opinions?

* Ollé-Laprune, *id.*, p. 15.

Contemporary philosophy lays stress upon the close relation between a man's moral tendencies and his philosophy. It says, with Jouffroy, that to philosophise "is an affair of the soul." It applauds Fichte in the following words: "Each man conforms to his own nature in his choice of a philosophy. A philosophic system is not a piece of furniture, a lifeless thing that one takes or leaves at will; but is, as it were, animated by the soul of the man who has adopted it."

Does not this show that we neither judge nor philosophise with our reason alone? that the personality of the soul which reasons is a capital element in the perception of truth? that the tendencies of the soul influence the systems of philosophy, and in a way create them? That, even in the most rationalistic philosophy, just as in friendship, and as in the judgments of men, the heart and the will have a preponderant place and an exceptional share?

Is it not this that Plato would have us understand in *Phædre*? "The demonstration which I am about to give," he says, "will not be admitted by the clever, but will be accepted by the wise. It is a demonstration, and there will be able men, learned and clever, who will not comprehend it; it will not reach them; they will reject it. But the truly wise will appreciate it; they will recognise its worth and will accept the evidence. The first, despite their wit and their knowledge, will remain incredulous; the others will believe."

Here is clearly denounced the inability of "clever people"—that is to say, of those who care only to argue, to grasp that which belongs

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to another order, or perceive the things of philosophy and of wisdom.

This being the case, what shall we say concerning the soul, concerning the things of God, of the problems of our eternal destinies? What must not be the share of the heart and will in the perception of religious and moral truths? Must we not repeat more emphatically and with more reason than ever, that "it is with the whole soul we must go towards truth"?*

The part played by the heart and the will in belief, and the necessity of certain dispositions of soul before faith can be reached—and here I speak expressly of Catholic faith—this part and this necessity are asserted by the Church and vouched for by Scripture. Innumerable are the texts and passages in the Old and New Testaments where faith is shown to us as the reward of virtue, humility, purity, and prayer, and not as the conquest of the intellect.

Does this conception of faith, that of the Church and of Scripture, correspond to reality? In other words, does the formation of Catholic faith demand the co-operation of the heart and

* During the past century, contemporary philosophy has unanimously recognised that it is necessary to distinguish between demonstration properly so-called, and the proof required in moral questions; it has recognised that truths of the moral and religious order are not grasped in the same way as others, and that we must place our souls in certain dispositions to attain to them.

" 'Unless you are careful to make men good,' wrote Kant, 'you will never make them sincere believers.' "

—Ollé-Laprune, *id.*, pp. 11 and 151.

the will? It is easy to convince ourselves of this, and thus completely prove that faith, in making use of the three essential elements which constitute the soul, corresponds fully with our nature, and is truly the law of man's being.

It is indeed true that in all preliminary inquiries, in all those investigations proper to arguments of credibility, the will and the heart have an important share.

What is it that stirs indifference and mental torpor with regard to moral and religious truths? The will; for, says St. Thomas, "it is in man's power to see or not to see." * What is it that forces reason to seek, to study, to fathom, to ask and answer questions of origin, duty, moral conduct, of final destinies? The will.

What is it that urges us to examine the great fact of Revelation, and leaves us no rest until we have found the solution sought for? The will.

What is it that enables us to overcome difficulties and obstacles, the vain fears which the discovery of truth cause us?—for truth is hard to bear: it speaks, commands, urges, threatens, dismays! What is it that gives reason the strength to proceed and to think nothing of these phantoms, which have tormented a St. Augustine and barred his path to belief? The will.

What is it that ratifies, by successive assents, the knowledge acquired, and changes the purely rational assent to a moral conviction, which thus

* Sum. Th., IIa, IIæ, 9, 2, a, 9.—Largent, "La Foi." p. 25.

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delivers the soul up, like a thing conquered, to truth, which takes possession of it? The will.

So true is this, that if the will does not act reason remains in its original torpor, and sinks into indifference; or if it makes a beginning it soon halts, discouraged. Of how many men is this true! How many do not even try to set out upon the road to religious truth! How many lack perseverance, tire too soon, and stop at the first obstacle! How many seem appalled by that which the light reveals, that which truth exacts! How many lose their way, go backward instead of advancing, and insist upon seeing only the objections and not the proofs, upon examining dogmas from the wrong side, never from the right!

The will is needful that reason may act, continue, and persevere, that it may follow the right path; needful that the soul may become attached to truth progressively, as it discovers it.

But what is it that in turn causes the will to act? What sets it in motion and directs its influence upon the reason? What gives the will its strength, its constancy? The heart, the mysterious and marvellous power common to all of feeling and of loving!

Several contemporary philosophers have realised the share of the heart in the search for truth, and to the moral faith of Kant, which is wholly rational, they have added or substituted love.

The heart, indeed, does exercise an undeniable influence over the will and the reason. Over the will, for we should not seek for truth if we did not already love it. It is because we love it, and in proportion as we love it, that we

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wish to know it, the better to have and to hold it. The true cause of religious indifference is egoism, the lack of heart! Indifferent souls are souls without love; and St. Paul counted the sin of indifference as one of the crimes of the pagans, because it is the sin against Divine love.

Thus it is the heart that urges the will in the search for truth.

And if you ask me how can one love that which one does not know, that which one does not yet possess, I reply: We do already know and possess truth, and, as Pascal said: "We should not seek it if we had not found it and if we did not possess it!" *

What, then, is this mystery? Here is the explanation.

Moral truth is not mathematical truth, cold and abstract; it is the whole truth, the living truth, the truth which is the good and the beautiful as well as the true: in a word, God Himself.

Now, God is far from being unknown to us, or a stranger. Between the human soul which is made "in the likeness of God," and God, who is Truth, Goodness, and Beauty in essence, there are beside marvellous resemblances, profound affinities, and natural attractions. The soul has need of God; it hungers and thirsts for Him, because by instinct it already knows Him, and in a certain sense holds Him within itself.†

* "Le Mystère de Jésus," Nos. 2 and 6.

† I speak here of God known naturally. In the supernatural order, to reach God man requires an extraordinary assistance, and a wholly gratuitous grace; a grace which by nature he has no right to, nor any aptitude for.

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This first knowledge is still very vague, this first possession very incomplete, yet already they enable the soul to begin to love God. Then, if man follows the inspiration of this first love, which is in the depth of his being, if by using his liberty as he should—instead of letting himself be deceived by the false goods of this world to which he is sensibly attracted—he raises himself, by means of love, above the sphere of the senses. If he concentrates all his attention and listens, if he turns and fixes his gaze on high, then truth will appear to him ever more fully as his sovereign good, not in a cold light which leaves him untouched, nor in a glare which dazzles and dismays, but in a penetrating splendour which warms, charms, and delights.

Between the soul and truth marvellous interchanges take place, as between two loving hearts, and a kind of “connaturality,” according to the word of St. Thomas. By means of the good, loved and ardently desired, the heart discovers that which is true, pursues it, and urges the will to follow. And the more clearly truth, beauty, and goodness appear, the more dear are they to the heart, which thirsts more ardently for them, and more eagerly incites the will to its work. And so is formed a blessed circle, from heart to will and from will to heart, from love to knowledge and from knowledge to love; while, on the contrary, the heart that neglects the first invitation of love discourages the will, which in turn still further chills and closes the heart.

But the heart not only acts upon the will, and through the will upon reason; it still further acts directly upon reason, to enlighten it.

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The immediate effect of the heart upon reason is manifest, and Scripture makes mention of it in speaking of "the enlightened eyes of the heart." Yes, the heart has eyes, or, as Pascal expresses it, "reasons which reason knows not." Reason is, as it were, opened out, dilated, raised above itself by love. It receives from love a delicacy, a marvellous penetration, a power like that of those luminous rays which know no obstacle. We understand those whom we love before they speak; we actually penetrate their thoughts, we read their souls by a veritable intuition; we have intelligence of them, in the etymological sense of the word, "*intus legere*."

Yes, we must love moral truth in order to comprehend it in all its depth and grasp it in all its vastness. It conceals itself from cold reason, above all from proud and haughty reason, in order to reveal itself to the humble and lowly. It flees from those who judge and disdain it, those who set themselves above it, those who do not love it enough to abase themselves at its feet and prefer it to themselves. It flees from the reason of those whose hearts are attached to the goods of this world and to material pleasures. Pure in itself it can form no alliance with impurity and debauchery. It seeks out the pure in heart; "*beati mundo corde quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt*." *

* This is why God, wishing to enlighten the reason of men, has spoken more especially to their hearts. "God," says Lacordaire, "who has given to His creatures so great a magnificence, such manifest attractions, that our hearts might be touched by them, has acted with no less might and generosity when He

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This was experienced by St. Augustine ; and this great genius—whose vast reason, astray at first and perverted by the corruption and errors of the heart, was led to the full light by the cleansing and renewal of the heart, by the victory of sane and moral love over sensual and earthly love—St. Augustine loved to say : “ *Da amantem et sentit quod dico ; da desiderantem, da esurientem, da in ista solitudine peregrinantem atque sitientem et fontem æternæ patriæ suspirantem : da talem et seit quid decam.* ” *

The heart, then, acts upon the reason ; it is a centre of light, and the splendours with which it illumines the mind are marvellous. Love supplements the work of reason, and bears it, without effort, to the highest summits.†

has wished to exhibit the Divine beauty and goodness to the eyes of men. He has shown them in the Man-God living amongst us and dying for us on Calvary, a death of love, and He has written the Gospel to bear to our hearts the ineffable story of this life and death. . . . When we reject Christianity we reject, by deliberate ingratitude, the greatest love that the world has ever known ; we misuse our moral liberty by a supreme effort, and change into a malediction against us the sweet canticle that the angels sang at the advent of the Son of Man : ‘ Peace upon earth to men of goodwill.’

“ Good-will—that is, will inspired by the heart and by the love of goodness. It is that which enlightens the reason and leads it to the possession of moral and religious truth.”—Thirteenth Sermon at Notre Dame de Paris : “ *Moyens d’acquérir la Foi.* ”

* In Joan, Cap. 6 (Brév. fer IV. q. temp. Pentec.).

† “ It is thus,” says Lacordaire, “ that so many men who know nothing attain nevertheless to faith. They arrive by the road of love ; their souls, which could scarcely have responded to Divine ideas, because of their elevation, have been easily touched by Divine

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Experience proves it : children, the poor, the working-man would be incapable of explaining the rational basis of their faith, and yet their faith is sincere and true : the heart and will make up for the insufficiency of their reason.

Many men of intelligence too, who have believed since childhood, and who would be perfectly capable of reasoning out and understanding the arguments of credibility, have none the less never done so, at least never thoroughly, and yet are perfectly calm and assured in their faith. The interior foundations for certitude which are the result of will and heart again in this instance make up for what is lacking in instruction, and their faith is no less personal and living.

And, finally, take note of the ordinary, practical manner in which men are converted. For one who is led by reason, a hundred are guided by an illumination of the heart and will.

charity. They have recognised God in goodness rather than in knowledge, and knowledge, jealous of their hearts, has fallen upon them with love. It is this marvel that some have sought to dishonour by speaking slightly of the faith of the ignorant—the 'faith of the simple.' There is no more a 'faith of the simple' than a 'reason of the simple.' The reason of the simple man is worth that of Newton, and many a woodcutter in the forest of Versailles had concerning Divine things a light as profound as that of Bossuet amazing the court of Louis XIV. by his doctrine and eloquence. And on the day of judgment there will be found amongst the ignorant those whose faith has been greater and who have had more light than the theologians, because love sees further than the intelligence ; and where the soul consents, truth will bear it away as the eagle takes her young upon her back to lead them to the sun."—Thirteenth Sermon at Notre Dame de Paris.

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And even those who attain to truth chiefly through reason are never exempt from certain necessary dispositions of the soul.

Between Louis Bautain, aged twenty-two, scholar, professor, in the flush of success, but an unbeliever, and Bautain converted and a priest, what had taken place? A pitiless illness which bound him to a bed of suffering, and the charity of an admirable Christian, Mademoiselle Humann.

What changed Lacordaire, the Parisian law-student and sceptic, into the preacher and apostle of Notre Dame? The disenchantment on the very threshold of glory, of "a heart tired of all things, while yet a stranger to all"; these are his words. Later he ever spoke with emotion of that sublime moment when a flash of dazzling light from his heart wrung from him the final cry: "Yes, I believe!"

What changed young Gratry, fresh from college, denying God, into the Père Gratry, priest and monk? A vision, rapid as lightning, in which he saw the emptiness of all things here below, and which drew from his heart an ardent prayer.

What changed Dupuytren, renowned for science, but hard, cold, proud, remote from all religion, into the Dupuytren who, at the point of death, charged his adopted son to write the following message to a poor village priest: "The doctor in his turn has need of you. Come quickly!" It was the admirable courage of the humble priest, whom the great man had cured of a most frightful ill. Dupuytren was vanquished by a moral strength in which he had seen, as it were, a revelation of God.

Reason may prepare men to return to God,

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and, as we have said, the paths which lead to light are many. But the light of the mind can never effect nor explain all. The heart and will finally intervene to decide all.

As Monseigneur Dupauloup said to his hearers "Between you and religion it is less a question of truth than a question of virtue."

"It is virtue that makes you fear faith," cried Lacordaire. "You have nothing against faith but your vices!" *

"The heart is a party to heresy," wrote Louis Veuillot. "There burns the fire whose smoke dims evidence. If God were other than He is, or if He were not! This is the secret prayer in which scientific incredulity finds common ground with belief." †

Truth resists our passions, imposes laws, demands sacrifices, and opposes our independence: there is its crime, and there our reason for denying it.

Thus Malebranche wrote truly: "If men had any interest in proving that the sides of like angles were not equal, if false geometry were as convenient to their perverse inclinations as false ethics, they would assuredly make propositions as absurd in geometry as in ethical matter, because their errors would please them: and the truth would only embarrass, confuse, and annoy them." ‡ In other words, between the soul and truth are the clouds of human passions, which only the potent breath of love can dissipate. Only the heart can act so

* Twelfth Sermon at Notre Dame de Paris, "La Foi."

† "Vie de Jésus Christ," avant propos, p. 4.

‡ "De la recherche de la Vérité," L. IV., Chap. II.

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powerfully upon the will and reason as to lead man to the possession of religious truth ; and, as has been said by M. Alfred Fouillee, " the acceptance of the supreme intelligible is a moral act of love."

Do not reply that such a process of attaining to truth, one in which the heart and will have so great a share, is no longer reasonable. It would not be so were the heart and will to shape truth according to their desires ; indeed, in the words of Bossuet, it would be a sign of " the greatest mental disorder to believe things true because one wanted them to be so." *

But the facts are quite otherwise. The heart and will urge the mind to seek for truth without prejudice, and dispose the mind to accept truth as it appears to it. The guarantee of our sincerity in this is the effort we make, and the sacrifices of which we bear the burden.

On the other hand, by means of the motives of credibility reason retains its rights, and we have seen that these motives are very searching, and that there exists an exact demonstration of Catholic faith according to the order admitted in moral questions.

" If you assert a proposition," said Locke, " with more assurance than your arguments justify, it is not the truth that you love." Our arguments permit us to affirm all that we do affirm. But our arguments are not confined to the discussions of pure reason, for we have shown its weakness and its limitations : † we

* Bossuet, " *Connaissance de Dieu et de Sio-même*," Chaps. I to XVI.

† " Newman," by H. Brémond, pp. 260, 159, 165, 258, 268.

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are not confined to an equation, we do not imprison the human soul in a syllogism.

We believe that reason itself is loftier and broader than the mere process of reasoning, and that the reason of the simplest has intuitions of a moral order, similar to those of genius in the natural order.

We believe that there is a reason superior to that which argues and often goes astray in the obscure and winding paths of involved dialectics ; a reason superior to the arrogant reason which, wishing to scrutinise all things, is crushed by its own pretensions ; * it is the reason which has reached its goal, no matter by what path ; reason which has found and which sees, invenimus Messiam ; † reason which, borne on the wings of love, contemplates truth and is filled with it, and which comprehends it the better as it possesses it more completely and enjoys it more fully : cognoscit de doctrina utrum ex Deo sit. ‡

Neither tell me that : " With a faith thus formed you can never arrive at an absolute certitude ! "

I reply that the Church exacts this certitude of us, and would not consider sufficient a faith which was not founded upon certitude. § Nevertheless I repeat, as I have already pointed out, that the certitude of moral truths is not and cannot be of the same nature as the certitude of physical or mathematical truths, but it is none the less a veritable certitude.

* Qui scrutator est majestatis, opprimetur a gloria.
—Prov. xxv. 27.

† We have found the Messiah.—St. John I. 41.

‡ St. John vii. 17.

§ P. de Bainvel, " La Foi," p. 103.

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I affirm, with Olle-Laprune, that "the sign of certitude is not always that necessary connection of ideas which renders doubt absolutely and metaphysically impossible, but that it is enough that we cannot doubt without blaming ourselves, without feeling the secret reproaches of reason, without the consciousness that we have wronged the truth in hesitating to recognise it." *

I add, with Caro, that far from feeling less assured of moral truths than of mathematical truths, "we are more fully assured, at least better assured, if that be possible," † because our certitude is not the result of a purely intellectual logic, but is the result of the logic of the whole soul.

Finally, this certitude is an undeniable and universal fact, acknowledged for the past twenty centuries; a fact to which the souls of millions of Christians have offered the most overwhelming testimony, testimony of the most sublime virtues, the most heroic sacrifices, the most wonderful self-denial, of the most constant and courageous effort; the testimony of torture and death, of blood, the undeniable testimony, as Pascal has said, of "witnesses who offer themselves for slaughter!"

Do not suppose, however, that our certitude is purely subjective. This is the danger, the temptation for a modern thinker. But were subjectivism to triumph it would destroy all; all would be swallowed up in its triumph.

No, it is not truth which is subjective, but

* Ollé-Laprune, p. 244.

† Caro "Etude sur Jouffroy."—*Revue des Deux Mondes*, March 15th, 1865.

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our dispositions, the dispositions necessary to the soul in order to attain to truth.

Our knowledge of truth depends upon our subjective dispositions, but not so the existence of truth. We do not say truth exists according to each person's disposition, but that his knowledge of truth depends upon his disposition.

Truth does not depend upon you ; you do not *cause it to be*, in the actual sense of the word. Truth is, and it is you that are subject to it. Truth imposes its conditions before it surrenders to you. It may escape you, may, in a sense, die within you ; but in itself it exists, it is objectively real and lives eternally ; *veritas Domini manet in æternum.**

Here ends my demonstration. I will sum up and conclude.

Like all beings in this world, man obviously has a law. This law, which alone can lead him to his end, must correspond with his organism, with his complete and integral nature. It must neither ignore nor destroy any one of the three essential elements which constitute his nature, but must in some sort express them, call them into play, realise them in action. It must cause each to do its share harmoniously and normally, without opposing one to the other, dividing or isolating them. It must unite all in a combined activity, where each mutually helps the other, and all converge towards the same end. Then only will the soul act in its entirety, and the true law of man, the law of his moral nature, will be respected.

* Psalm cxv. 12.

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According to these obvious principles, the moral faith of some, of Kant and of all philosophers in general who, by placing faith above or below reason, separate it therefrom, cannot be the law of man's being, since one of the essential elements of man's nature is set aside.

The rationalism of those who accept only that which can be proved by pure reason is practically impossible, and constantly belied by its own disciples in their perpetual and inevitable acts of faith. This rationalism refuses to admit the share of the will and the heart in the formation of certitude, so this again cannot be the law of man's being ; it rejects two of his essential constituent elements.

Catholic faith, on the other hand, escapes the vices of these two different systems. It makes use of man's entire nature. Intelligence, will, and heart are united in a common task, a uniform effort, a harmonious concert. Their influences combine, intermingle, blend, to result in a certitude which is at once luminous and obscure, firm and profound, free and meritorious.

Instead of dividing man, Catholic faith respects his unity. It considers all his powers sets all his energies to work ; it unites reason, heart, and will in the pursuit of the sovereign good, unchanging truth, eternal love.

Now the true, the beautiful, and the good are different aspects of being, which in God are but one and the same, and cannot be separated. Thus in man the reason, the heart and the will are but the several modes of action of one and the same soul, of one and the same person, and must not be disunited. Catholic faith compre-

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hends and realises this. Here we no longer find two men, two minds, as in Kant's theory, but one and the same man, single in the diversity of his operations, who acts with all his powers united, and grasps the truth with his whole soul.

Faith is truly the law of man's being, because it is adapted so exactly and perfectly to his nature that it is obvious nothing could suit him more precisely; because, finally, it is the *human* act above all others in the fullest meaning of the word. An act practically necessary: for what would become of humanity if, in accordance with the Cartesian precept, "each man were to admit as true only that which he could prove to be obviously true"? An act all the more necessary as the knowledge to be acquired is more far-reaching and of a higher order; more necessary than ever, therefore, when it is a question of moral truths—that is, of those truths which lead man to his end.

Thus the act of faith is a moral act that is fundamental, essential, since it is the law of man's being, and therefore true and legitimate!

Now, as I warned you in the beginning, I have considered Catholic faith only in its natural and human psychology, if I may say so. I have purposely left untouched the subject of grace, and all that which theologians call the supernatural order. But I must add, in a few words, that grace and prayer have a place apart, and a very great share in the Catholic act of faith.

What does this mean? That God intervenes in a special and pre-eminent manner, and at every turn, in the preparation and formation of faith, by an assistance, an exceptional aid, by

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an intense action upon the reason, the heart, and will ; upon the whole soul.

Prayer still further increases this action of God, renders it more profound and searching, and calls forth a superabundance of grace.

God anticipates all our efforts. He urges us on, He sustains and assists us in all our activities. He leads us to our goal, He confirms us in the possession of truth. Moreover, He adds something of Himself ; He raises the whole to a superior order, an order absolutely new, and really supernatural.*

So our conclusion is this : that in Catholic faith all becomes clear and is vindicated, all ascends and assumes admirable proportions.

Were faith the privilege of an intellectual few, a kind of academy reserved for the learned, a palace open only to the aristocracy of reason, the rich in knowledge, but forever closed to the great human mass, to the throng who toil and suffer, and to whom poverty and misfortune render all abstract study, all continued mental effort impossible, is it not clear what a glaring injustice this would be ? since it would thereby become impossible for all such to follow the law of their being and to fulfil their destiny.

But no ! Catholic faith is accessible to all, because it adapts itself to the weakness, the abilities, and voluntary disposition of each one. By preaching, by education, by uprightness of conscience faith can reach the masses ; it can touch the least civilised of peoples, even barbarians. At this thought the Saviour of the world trembled with joy, and a cry of thanks-

* P. de Bainvel, " La Foi," p. 46.

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giving went up to God from His heart : “ Confiteor tibi Pater quia . . . revelasti ea parvulis.” *

Thus faith is no longer the conquest of talent, of genius, nor even of human reason alone. The soul has other ways, other means by which to arrive at truth than those offered by an argument, an equation, or a scapel. It mocks the grim science which would chill its ardour. It is no longer the prisoner of a syllogism, a calculation, or a chemical reaction. Its transactions are no longer labelled and catalogued as are the products of science. The soul escapes from those who would imprison it in a laboratory and ascends to heights where neither the objections nor the contempt of its tyrants can reach it.†

It does not leave this world ; it remains here below. It has eyes to see, but also wings to soar. Although able to reason, it can, when needful, tower above argument. To argue is weakness ; genius does not argue. God does not argue ; He sees. Resembling God in its nature, the soul resembles Him also by its operations. Borne upon the wings of love it can rise even as high as truth, can contemplate it, grasp it, without discussion or analysis, by the effort of virtue.

Do you not see that this intervention of heart and will in the formation of certitude, in the acquisition of religious truth, is the necessary safeguard of liberty and morality ? Would not

* “ I confess to Thee, O Father . . . because Thou hast revealed these things to little ones.”—*St. Matt.* xi. 25.

† “ Newman,” by H. Brémond, pp. 260, 341, 332.

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physical or mathematical proof destroy both alike ?

Do you not see that if there is enough light in Catholic faith to satisfy reason, there is also enough obscurity to force the heart and will to act, to leave liberty untouched and to constitute merit ?

Do you not see that reason is not excluded, but does not suffice alone, and that "the imperfection of our knowledge is transformed into a means of going to God less unworthy of Him" ?

This obscurity in faith is a weakness, you may say. No doubt ; but a blessed weakness which gives us a privilege not enjoyed by the elect in Heaven, to whom full light is granted, in that we can exercise our liberty and augment our merit ; a weakness which therefore becomes, in the words of Descartes, "a very great advantage." If Socrates regarded as man's privilege the labour which it costs him to acquire knowledge,* is it not a signal privilege that moral law, although obligatory, is not imposed as obvious, and that virtue, instead of logic, is for us the condition of faith, the path of truth, and the gate of Heaven ? †

* Xenophon. *Memorabilia*, I, iv. 13.

† We too often forget the conditions in which we live here below. We are travellers journeying home, unfinished beings, in a state of trial. Hence the obscurity and the difficulty of faith, the possibility of doubt, and the need of effort. When we have reached our goal, Heaven, our condition will change entirely. No more clouds nor darkness ; no further effort nor difficulty. The full light will shine ; vision will replace faith : licet audivimus sie vidimus in civitate Domine. And to toil and the effort of virtue will succeed rejoicing and happiness without end : Satiabor cum apparerit gloria tua.

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A blessed weakness, which obliges us to be good in order to know that which is true, to practise righteousness that we may attain to truth, to "do the truth," according to the energetic words of St. Paul, in order to fully grasp it, finally to make our souls like unto God that we may be worthy to comprehend and to possess him ! *

And while it respects the liberty of man, the condition of his merit and his moral greatness, Catholic faith respects the liberty of God, and makes us feel our necessary dependence upon Him.†

Indeed this illumination of the soul, needful to attain to faith, this special assistance is given by God to whom He pleases, and always according to the adorable laws of His wisdom, His justice, and His goodness. God can produce directly, for example, that which genius produces in the minds of great men. He can fill them in an instant with unreasoned, though not unreasonable, light ; can communicate to them a certitude and a knowledge which all the powers of their nature alone could never have achieved. "And wisdom is justified by her children," says the Gospel.‡

And how often God acts thus ! Without counting the miraculous and exceptional illuminations received by St. Paul, St. Ignatius, the Cure d'Ars, and hundreds of others, how many humble and upright souls have received marvellous enlightenment concerning religion which would amaze philosophers and scientists, could

* Ollé-Laprune, p. 79.

† "Newman," by H. Brémond, p. 268.

‡ *St. Matt.* xi. 19.

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it be made known to them ! God has communicated His light to them, to reward and still further increase their virtues. God acts thus, according to St. Thomas, with regard to such infidels as follow the natural indications of their conscience ; He reveals to them directly that which is necessary to their salvation.

By this intervention of God, affirmed by the doctrine of the Church, and so in harmony with the noblest aspirations of the human soul, and the ineffable mercies of the Eternal Wisdom and Infinite Goodness, the Catholic act of faith is raised to sublime heights ; for it is no longer merely a human act, but also a Divine and supernatural act. Man is no longer alone : God has a considerable share therein, apart from and above all the demands of nature. Catholic faith is the sublime encounter and union of man with God, the religious act above all.

This act is at once of earth and of heaven : earthly, in what it contains of human ; heavenly because in part Divine. It is bound to this world by the reason, the heart, and the will of man ; it pertains to the other by the reason, the heart, the will, and the grace of God.

Both human and divine, this act of faith not only leads man to his natural end, but to his supernatural end, as Revelation shows it to us. And need we wonder that the Church and Scripture tell us that " faith is the beginning of Salvation, the foundation and reason of all justification," and that " without faith it is impossible to please God."

Is it surprising that our Lord Jesus Christ declares that " he who believes not is already judged " (*qui non credit jam judicatus est*) ?

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If Christopher Columbus had consulted his reason alone, do you think that he would have launched across the Atlantic to discover the New World? No; but he had in his favour the intuition of genius, which surpasses all reason; the energy of a will that knows no obstacle; the ardour of a generous heart which yearns for noble enterprises; the enthusiasm, the fearlessness of a faith which triumphs over all! He had the stars to guide him in his course, the breath of the winds to drive him out into the open sea and carry him far away.

He bore in his heart the mysterious presentiments with which God had inspired him. His faith as man of genius was sustained and still further heightened by his faith as Christian and apostle. And the success of his mad but magnificent enterprise was the result of so many human and divine forces united in his heart.

Now we are all called to the discovery, or rather the conquest, of a new world. Beyond this earth, beyond the shifting tides of this life, beyond the dangers and the tempests here below, there is another world, a promised land, which we are destined to possess, and wherein we shall find eternal peace.

Think you that reason alone can guide us on such a journey? To dare to undertake it, to rouse ourselves from a guilty idleness; to escape the storms and reefs, to find our way through mists and fog, keeping ever the straight path, we have need of all the allied forces of heart and will joined with those of reason. We have need of our whole soul, with all its energies; we have need to call upon the light of heaven and the aid of God; we have need of all the united

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powers of our faith as men and Christians, of all the resources of nature and of grace.

Then only may we hope that this long journey will be a successful one, that at its close we shall not lose ourselves in the darkness of eternal night, shall not sink into the unfathomable depths of despair; but, as the happy and valiant companions of the great navigator, we shall cry, all enthusiasm, all delight: "Land! Land!" Or rather—for the shore which we shall approach bears a better name, one which tells more clearly of all its blessings, all its joys—we shall cry, enraptured: "Heaven, Heaven!"*

* Had man but a natural end to attain, he would even so have required the assistance of God. But given his supernatural end, as set before him by the Church, man is by his nature radically powerless to arrive thereat, and the help of God, grace, to give it here its rightful name, is absolutely indispensable.

III

THE NEED TO BELIEVE AND THE TRANSCENDENCY OF FAITH

Hæc est victoria quæ vincit mundum, fideo nostra
(This is the victory which overcometh the world, our
faith).—*First Epistle of St. John*, v. 4.

WHEN a scientist has discovered the law of an organism by the analysis of the elements of which it is composed, if he wishes to verify the truth of his discovery he makes a test experiment in order to assure himself that the facts in practice perfectly correspond with the facts in theory.

Take a plant, for example. Analysis has shown you its laws ; you know in what conditions of heat, humidity, soil, and altitude it must be placed to develop normally.

If you wished to be certain that you had not been mistaken what would you do ? You would place this plant in the exact conditions that analysis has taught you were necessary, and you would then observe it. If it drooped and perished it would indicate that some essential element was lacking, some element required by its law ; it would be the sign of some error in your analysis.

If, on the contrary, it showed a rapid growth, bloomed and put forth flowers and shoots, you

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would have proof that you were not mistaken, that you had found the true law of the plant.

Let us apply this positive and experimental method to the human soul, with regard to the question before us.

We have discovered the law of the moral man by a careful analysis of the elements which constitute his nature. This law is faith, and in particular Catholic faith, which corresponds better than any other and in a superior degree to all the demands and all the faculties of the human soul.

If we have not deceived ourselves, we should find in facts the verification of the results of our analysis, and the proof of the correctness of our theory.

Now, if we observe humanity, two great and undeniable facts corroborate what we have set forth, and ever strengthen our conviction that faith, and in particular Catholic faith, is truly the fundamental law of the moral man. We find the first of these facts in *instinct* and the second in *history*. The instinct of man and the history of man each in turn loudly proclaim and irresistibly prove this all-important truth, that faith is our essential law, and that without faith we must fail to reach our end.

Let us first examine the fact of *instinct*. It consists in a need to believe, not only universal, but so essential and so unchanging that, by a significant contradiction, we find it enduring in those very men who most strongly resist and oppose it.

This need to believe is vouched for in the first

place by the universality of religious feeling.* Everywhere and always we find priests,—altars, temples, sacrifices, or, at the very least, religious beliefs.

“All the great minds of antiquity,” says Lacordaire, “have respected and propagated religious faith. Read Homer, Sophocles, Plato, Aristotle, Virgil, Plutarch, and Cicero ; you will never find a disrespectful word concerning the Gods. Rising above the shallowness of the cults of their day, they express in their writings such profoundly religious sentiments that the Fathers of the Church have constantly quoted, together with the Gospels, maxims and passages from the poets, orators, historians, and other noble minds of antiquity.”†

Tertullian bears witness that the pagan in sickness and distress would cry : “O my God !” And in moments of joy : “O, how good God is !” And he adds : “O pagan, who taught thee thus ? Thine inspiration is the testimony of a naturally Christian soul !”

“Man,” says still further Lacordaire, “according to the words of Aristotle, is a religious animal ; he has everywhere believed in God, in the Divinity, in His public and private communications with souls and with empires, in the efficacy of prayer, sacrifice, and worship, in a future, happy or unhappy, beyond the limits of time ; he has believed all this with

* Some have sought recently to deny the universality of religious feeling, but in vain. See *Revue pratique d'Apologetique*, 1st November, 1905, “Valeur Apologetique de l'Histoire des Religions.” Beauchesne, 117, rue de Rennes, Paris.

† Thirteenth Sermon at Notre Dame de Paris.

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the utmost readiness, with unshaken constancy ; not only when religion was favourable to his passions, but since it has humiliated and crushed them ; not only under the sway of Venus and Adonis, but under the reign of Love Crucified. Humanity has never ceased to bring its desires and its tears to the foot of Altars ; it has never ceased to extend towards God imploring hands, hands which have reached Him, and which are thus the cause that the most glorious and holy book which the world has ever known calls God ' Desired of Nations.' " *

Has this universal fact of man's religious feeling been hindered or contradicted since human reason first raised its head, and asserted its superiority ? No ! And, as I have pointed out, we find it more than ever tenacious in an unexpected phenomenon, namely, in the *essential characteristic of modern incredulity which is belief.*

One of the masters of contemporary thought, whom I have already quoted, has asserted and proved this statement in a remarkable address on the " Need to Believe." Let me refer you to this discourse, and briefly sum up its conclusions ; they are, moreover, obvious.

" No doctrine has in our day momentarily triumphed over religion without itself assuming the appearance of a religion.†

We have seen the rise of a religion of science, of progress of the future, of solidarity, of humanity, of democracy ! We have been surfeited with new religions of every kind and under every name.

* Twelfth Sermon at Notre Dame de Paris.

† Brunetière, " Besoin de Croire."

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Did not De Tocqueville write of the Revolution that "it had itself become a sort of new religion, which, like Islamism, had inundated the whole earth with its soldiers, its apostles, and its martyrs"?

We might add that this religion had its rites, its ceremonies, its idols, that it "raised monuments, or rather consecrated altars" to its great men; that it offered worship to their relics, that it regarded them as "greater than nature." Men spoke currently of the "Giants of the Convention."

This proves that we cannot discard faith at will. It is inherent in the human soul, it is "anchored in our hearts"; and, as Père Gratry proclaimed: "There is a faith one must possess because one is a man."

Thus all who have abandoned or rejected the Christian faith have replaced it by another; they have been unable to dispense with faith.

And it is not modern incredulity alone which proves that the need to believe is essential to man, but the entire *philosophic movement* of the past three centuries considered as a whole proves the same.

Descartes founded his whole system, after mature consideration, upon divine veracity.

Jacobi and Kant, who were in opposition one to the other, both admitted the importance of the part played by faith, and even exaggerated its significance. They distorted and misrepresented, but could not destroy it. Kant said plainly: "We will do away with knowledge in order to substitute faith."

Fichte claimed to confound doubt, not by science, but by faith. He stated that our

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convictions were not of science, not of knowledge, but were beliefs.

Maine de Biran founds the system of human knowledge upon the system of our beliefs.

Hamilton distinguishes knowledge from belief, and declares that the original data of reason do not repose upon reason.

M. Renouvier says of Positivism: "Your determined attitude of indifference and negation with regard to all that you do not consider as scientifically established, has nothing to do either with science or logic. Your reduction of the human mind to science is not of science, it is a belief. It is a kind of religion."

Herbert Spencer in turn writes: "It is impossible for us to rid ourselves of the consciousness of a reality, hidden behind appearances, and from this impossibility results an indestructible belief in that reality."

Idealism, criticism, positivism, all forms of philosophy arrive at the same result: faith is the condition of all thought, of all certitude. Cardinal Newman, when attacking Hume, easily shows him that incredulity is not founded upon reason, but is itself an act of faith.

"We can go further," continues the authority above quoted, M. Brunetiere, and accurately state that which is involved in this act of faith. It is the necessary or absolute, according to such as Spencer, Kant, Descartes; and . . . Kant, Descartes, and others call it God."

Finally, the scientist can no more evade the necessity of belief than can the philosopher.

Science, properly so-called, reaches only phenomena. It does not touch the essence of things. Physical and vital phenomena, these

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are the exclusive domains of science. It cannot depart therefrom without calling upon belief.

When the scientist speaks of bodies and of life—which he readily does—he makes an act of faith, for by means of science he knows neither bodies nor life. At every turn, having said: “I know,” he is obliged to say: “I believe.” And thus Lacordaire concludes: “Faith and science are united in your soul, as phenomena and substance are united in beings; and if you seek to deny this, you do so blindly, and it is ever by faith that you will free yourself from faith.” *

Scientific incredulity, like philosophic incredulity and modern unbelief, thus returns to faith in spite of itself.

To what conclusion does this bring us? That man cannot throw off the yoke of faith: if he forsakes faith it is quickly to return to it. Or, rather, he cannot escape at all. As the lever needs a point of support, so man must make use of faith as an indispensable foundation to all the operations of his mind.

This is a fact. It is stupendous, undeniable; it goes back to the origins of humanity. Do not invoke the future. Faith is contemporary with the mind of man; it has been so since he issued from nothingness. It has had dealings with time, liberty, philosophy, and science. All the forces of humanity have conspired against it, but have been unable to destroy it. Thus it has been proved that it is not only universal, but fundamental and necessary; that it belongs to the essence of the human soul, and issues

* Twelfth Sermon at Notre Dame de Paris.

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from the most profound and irreducible instincts of man ; and finally that man cannot deny it without denying and annihilating himself.

These conclusions are the outcome, not of a theoretical demonstration, but of undeniable facts, of certain and objective realities. The Positivists will, most certainly, have no reason to complain of them.

Faith, then, is not only the universal " processus " of man's thought, but it is the necessary and essential one. Even in the order of scientific truths, as well as in that of moral and religious truths, man struggles and protests in vain ; he inevitably returns to faith and belief.

Faith orders in an absolute manner every thought, every intellectual activity, whatever it may be. Faith is the natural and intangible instinct of man ; it is therefore his law, the essential and primordial law of his thought, his being, his life.

This conclusion, drawn from the irreducible fact of instinct, is set forth no less clearly by the fact of history.

If faith is the law of the moral man it must, in all ages, have brought him advantages, and manifest and unparalleled facilities for reaching his end and fulfilling his destiny here on earth.

Now this is what history reveals in a most striking manner. And here I am no longer speaking of faith in general, but expressly of Catholic faith.

The transcendent superiority of the Catholic faith over reason in the moral guidance of humanity appears in all ages as incontestable and overwhelming.

When I say reason, I do not mean science : the complete bankruptcy of the latter, its irremediable failure in the moral order, are no longer denied.

I am referring to philosophic reason, which in all ages has laid claim to the moral guidance of man.

Let us frankly place philosophy beside faith, and impartially, in the light of history, compare them from the standpoint of their influence upon humanity.

Man *thinks, feels, and acts*. In the order of *thought and knowledge*, in the order of the *heart and sentiment*, in the order of *action*, I maintain that the inferiority of philosophy is obvious, and that the superiority of Catholic faith is incontestable and transcendent.

First, in the order of *knowledge and thought*, let us compare philosophy and faith under the triple aspect of *doctrine, method, and results*.

Philosophic doctrine manifestly lacks depth and breadth, clearness and universality.

It will not be difficult to show that it lacks depth and breadth. What does it teach us of the hereafter, of our origin, our duties, of our destiny, of the problems which touch us most closely, and concerning which we have an absolute need of exact knowledge ? Very little indeed.

It is true that philosophic reason can of itself rise even to God, and give rational and solid proofs of His existence. But facts show that when left to itself it has more often misconceived God, or misrepresented all thought of Him ; and when it has attained to Him it is by the inspiration of faith and the guidance

of the Church. "It is not clear," says Cardinal Newman, "that, taken in themselves, the phenomena of the visible world would ever have sufficed as facts to give the idea of a Creator. But universal tradition, that ready luminary which preceded the study of evidence, has been from the first, as it were, the divine interpreter of this obscure text."*

Is not the history of all the philosophy of the ancients a proof of this? Apart from the people of Israel, divinely educated by their prophets, in what philosophy was not the idea of God misrepresented?

And, since the advent of Christ, what illumination has not philosophy owed to Him?

The Rationalists have little reason to boast of their philosophic knowledge; allowance must be made for what they have borrowed. We do not grudge their finding enlightenment in the Gospel and in Revelation. But what we cannot admit, is that living on the crumbs from our table, enriched by our alms, they lay claim to all as their personal property. Let them borrow as much as they like, but let them own themselves our debtors, and not proclaim themselves the inventors of doctrines which the Church received from Jesus Christ, and by which the world lives.

Left to its own devices, rationalistic philosophy would have been reduced to very little; it would have reached but the surface of things.

Many men of our day have admitted as much, and before problems of the moral order they have pronounced the great word of "Nescience,"

* "Newman, *Psychology de la Foi*," by H. Brémond, p. 343.

or "beyond the limits of knowledge." It is impossible to confess more fully to incompetence. Thus, after four thousand years of effort, after travelling indefinitely in the same circle of three or four replies,* philosophy as a result arrives at the scientific and almost experimental proof, if not of its impotence, at least of the limits that the human mind can never cross.

Taken as a whole, many systems of literature, of methods of comprehension, many words and phrases, very few ideas, very little doctrine, and above all nothing profound concerning the destiny of man—such is the philosophy of all times, philosophy when divorced from faith.

As for the question of clearness, we cannot seriously use the word. Philosophy is open only to the initiated; and do the initiated themselves always understand? And finally—universality—not only it does not exist, but cannot exist. Philosophy is the privilege of the elect, that is, of a very small number. If it does not openly boast of the fact, at least the thought is there; and Renan, its spoiled child, fully gave vent to it in the following arrogant phrase: "Few persons have the right to disbelieve in Christianity."

Do not scoff at the philosophers who have lived strangers to faith; among them have been very great minds. But considering their systems as a whole, we see how little they have been able to accomplish, and we feel compassion for their weakness. It more fully emphasises the power of faith.

* Brunetière, "Raisons Actuelles de Croire."

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Contrary to philosophic doctrine, the doctrine of Catholic faith is comprehensive and profound, clear and universal.

In a few sentences, in the eight Beatitudes the Gospel teaches us more than all the philosophies combined. What am I saying? In these words alone: "Thou shalt love thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself" there is more teaching than in all the books of men.

All that we have need to know for our guidance in this world and to enable us to fulfil our destiny—questions of origin, of duty, of our latter end—all is resolved by the Gospel.*

The doctrine of faith is as profound as it is comprehensive: it penetrates even to the substance of God to define Him; it speaks to us of the Trinity, of grace, of the Divine life, of the vision face to face, of the mysteries of the hereafter, of heaven and of hell.

The Jews, amazed on hearing this language of faith, cried out: "Never did man speak like this man." †

* "We are struck by the fact that those minds which are most strictly given over to faith, minds wherein all becomes but the manifestation of dogma, are notwithstanding in communion with universal reason. This is so fully the case that their accuracy is habitually recognised even by those who ignore its source.—To believe should isolate a man in an age when faith is rare, yet it is otherwise. All powers of sympathy and comprehension are still further the share of those who believe, and one might say that, from this lofty standpoint, they enjoy the advantage of those who speak many languages, inasmuch as they understand and are understood by a greater number of people."—Mme. Swetchine.

† *Nunquam sic loquitur homo sicut hic homo.*—*St. John* vii. 46.

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Moved by the same sentiment, a profound thinker has written of Jesus: "We feel that He is born in the mystery which He reveals, and that He is the sun of truth, not merely the ray of truth which He brings." Our Lord gave us the reason of this: "Nemo novit Patrem nisi Filius, et cui voluerit Filius revelare." *

The depth and absolute transcendency of the doctrine of faith are thus as obvious as is its comprehension.

Its clearness is no less manifest. It is discussion which makes philosophy obscure. Faith does not argue nor discuss. It explains and affirms.

"Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, thou shalt not take thy neighbour's wife." There is no shadow of doubt here, nothing ambiguous; all is clear.

If, side by side with this marvellous lucidity, we find obscurities, take note that they are necessary. The doctrine of faith does not reject mystery, but on the contrary affirms it; it puts it in the foremost place—and why? To keep us conscious of our littleness, to give us the merit of submission, because, as Cardinal Newman said, Revelation was not granted us to make us wise, but to make us better; because, finally, and above all, being finite creatures, it is impossible that we should ever penetrate the infinite, impossible that there should be a religion without mysteries.

* Neither doth anyone know the Father, but the Son, and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal Him.—*St. Matt. ii. 27.*

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And, lastly, this doctrine of faith, so broad, so profound, so clear, is universal ; it excludes no one, and speaks to the humblest and most ignorant as well as to the greatest and most learned.

Is not one of the most beautiful signs of its truth that which our Lord gave to the messengers of John : *pauperes evangelizantur* ? *

By boasting that they speak only to the few, philosophers reveal one of their greatest weaknesses, and the accusing sign of their inability to guide humanity.

The doctrine of faith, addressing itself to every man born into the world, thus shows its superiority and proves that it is the true law of man.†

Truth must not be a privilege ; it must be universal. Now the doctrine of faith is universal. It is addressed to children, to workers, to slaves, to the masses, to barbarians, and to savages. It has been heard and understood by all. It has placed itself within reach of the feeblest and most uneducated minds.

“ Is not our admiration beyond words,” wrote de Bonald, “ when we see this sustenance of the strong transformed to nourish the weak ? ”

By so many combined advantages, does not

* The poor have the Gospel preached to them.—*St. Matt.* xi. 5.

† Cousin, when nearing his end, noted this in a conversation quoted by his companion in the *Correspondant* of June 10th, 1881 : “ You see these men (three poor mountaineers who were passing), have they the time to examine the ins and outs of philosophic questions ? And would they, moreover, have the intellectual strength ? No ! Then by what means can they attain to truth ? They have need of Jesus Christ.”

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faith already wholly surpass philosophy from the point of view of doctrine?

We find the same superiority in the matter of method.

Philosophic method has two defects. Firstly, it is slow and difficult; it requires much time and study, which prevents it from being accessible to the majority. Secondly, it lacks authority and is incapable of producing certainty. Amid so many conflicting systems, which affirm, deny, and contradict each other, how should philosophy determine our choice, how tell us what choice is preferable? This is beyond its powers.

A young man asked of d'Alembert, on his death-bed, whether all that he had written of Christianity appeared to him certain. And the scholar replied with emotion: "Ah,—certain? . . ."

What philosopher, if he wished to be sincere, would not give the same reply with regard to his teaching? Doubt, lack of certainty, is the ordinary, one might say the essential, frame of mind of the philosopher.

It has been said with much justice: "We have need of an authority which decides." The Church supplies this authority, and at the same time gives us certitude. For the believer there is no more hesitation. "Nos loquimur quod scimus," said Jesus to Nicodemus.* God has spoken. God can neither deceive Himself nor us. There is the incontestable authority and the unchanging certitude of which we have such an invincible need in the grave questions concerning our destinies.

* We speak what we know.—*St. John* iii. 11.

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And then time presses ; we must act. From the first awakening of reason we should make use of our liberty. By means of authority faith soon teaches us our duties, and traces them already in detail before even we can understand their full import.

How well this method of authority, undeniable, swift, and certain, is suited to our nature, and to our condition here below ! Jouffroy owned as much when he said : “ The child who has learned its catechism knows more than the philosophers.”

And if, indeed, as Napoleon said, it is thought which rules the world, the sceptre of that thought which truly guides humanity has never been in the hands of genius, but ever in the hands of religion. And this is one of the reasons, pointed out by Lacordaire, why genius which seeks to dominate has often attacked religion.

The method of authority, the only method capable of spreading a doctrine with rapidity and certainty, is the privilege reserved to faith, to the exclusion of philosophy.

And, finally, let us examine the *results*. What are they ? A succession of disasters for philosophy, a series of triumphs for faith.

In the case of philosophy disaster is caused by pride. It has exalted reason, it has made a divinity of it ; it has overwhelmed with contempt all that will not bear argument. It has established the human mind as sovereign judge of truth ; it has led truth captive to the feet of man. Philosophy separated from faith is steeped in pride. Authorised writers have gone so far as to call it pedantry.

Humility, on the contrary, is the triumph of

faith. The reason of the believer recognises its impotence, its radical weakness ; it bows before a superior reason, which is that of God. Those who speak of the pride of the believer are strangely in error. His perfect certainty to alone possess truth is not pride, since he does not attribute it to any merit of his own, but refers all to God. He feels his obligation to God, he prostrates himself before Him, knowing himself His debtor, and the debtor of his less fortunate and less privileged brothers. What a contrast to the false humility of the philosopher, when he speaks of the "unknowable" or of Nescience ; when, in the name of his private and personal opinion, he prevents others from reaching the truth !

St. Paul has admirably shown that this humility of the believer entered into the designs of God, when he said : " For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of *our* preaching to save them that believe." *

Faith demands humility of mind ; it affirms the incarnation of the Word, which is in a way the annihilation of God, and it obliges the believer to submit to the Divine teaching and to adore mysteries which seem folly to the eyes of reason : placuit per stultitiam prædicationis salvos facere credentes.

The second downfall of philosophy is caused by error. Among so many systems which are in open disagreement how can we fail to see that error must be rampant ? Have not the most eminent minds fallen into gross error, which common sense would repudiate ?

* *First Epistle to Corinthians* i. 21.

Consequently, philosophy has bred trouble in the souls of men, the natural outcome of the profound disorder of their minds ; it has multiplied those melancholy victims of doubt, whose anguish and sufferings have been depicted in the noble work of Mgr. Baunard, " *Les Victimes du Doute.*" It could not be otherwise ; it was in the nature of things. The predominance of individual reason must inevitably lead to universal doubt and confusion.

Faith, on the other hand, in giving mental security, has brought peace to men's souls. Peace is the beginning and the end of the Gospel. It is promised to those who receive the good tidings, it is given to those who believe : *pacem relinquo vobis, pacem meam do vobis.**

While philosophy sinks hopelessly in error and confusion, faith triumphs in truth and in peace : *justitia.†*

And, finally, the last disaster of philosophy—irremediable division. Last and supreme triumph of faith in the order of thought, a perpetual and unbroken unity. What a contrast !

Philosophy has been conscious of this weakness, and in all times, together with the liberty of individual judgment, has felt the need of a fixed rule determining the wise and the true in civil law and in the State. The men of to-day appear to have sought this in public opinion. But neither the State nor the law nor opinion have ever been able to answer this need of a visible rule, which in man is united to the need of liberty. The Catholic Church alone

* Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.
—*St. John* xiv. 27.

† Justice and peace have kissed.—*Psalms* lxxxiv. 11.

has given this rule to the world ; and to the diversity of systems as to the multiplicity of religious sects it has invariably opposed the intangible unity of its Credo. While exacting from each believer a personal act of faith, it has set above all an invariable rule, which triumphs over all dissension and forever ensures the most marvellous union of minds.

Is not this an unparalleled triumph, unique in history ?

To sum up : Where is the law of the human mind to be found ? In philosophy, which lacks depth and breadth, clearness and universality, authority and certitude ; which puffs up and exalts the mind, which casts it into error, confusion, and irremediable division ? Or, rather, is it to be found in Catholic faith, whose doctrine is comprehensive and profound, clear and universal, faith which speaks with authority and gives certitude, which humiliates the spirit without breaking it, which brings it light and peace, which finally unites all minds without destroying their liberty, in a common adhesion to the same teachings ?

And now if we would compare philosophy and faith with regard to the *order of sentiment* and the *order of action*, we have but to draw inferences, or to state facts.

In the order of feeling or sentiment, how can philosophy, which exalts, confuses, and divides the mind of man, satisfy his heart ? When the mind is baffled there is anguish of heart. Where will the heart find strength and consolation, if not in the light of truth and certainty ? And when both are lacking what remains but despair ?

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Victor Hugo established this before the National Assembly, on the 15th of January, 1850: "Religious instruction," he cried, "is more necessary to-day than ever. The greater man grows the more he should believe. There exists in our time an evil, I might almost say that there is but one, a certain tendency to sacrifice all to this life! In making of this earthly and material life man's goal, we intensify all his woes by the negation at the end. To the despondency of the unfortunate we add the insupportable burden of annihilation; and what was but suffering, that is to say, the law of God, we thereby turn to despair, the law of Hell. Hence profound social convulsions.

"The first improvement is to give hope to the unfortunate. How much less become our finite-trials when infinite hope mingles with them!"

Incapable of affording "this infinite hope," at least with the certitude and the completeness required, philosophy could bring the human heart no serious consolation.

Before suffering the Rationalist steels himself, hardens his nature and becomes a stoic.

Philosophy, bereft of faith, has produced nothing finer than the *De consolatione* of Seneca. Read it in your time of suffering and sorrow, and see if it can dry a single tear!

Before an open grave, a ruined fortune, an illness, treachery on the part of a friend, philosophy is powerless.

No doubt sound reason can of itself attain to the knowledge of God and the future life, and find in these thoughts strength and consolation. But, in practice, this is rare, without the aid

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of faith, and the knowledge so obtained but dead and fruitless, and unable to soothe the anguish of the heart.

What we need is no speculative idea, but the intercourse of our soul with God, a certainty that there are bonds, and an exchange of love, between God and ourselves, that an ever-Fatherly Providence watches over us; finally, that even if we do not understand the designs of God, nothing can happen to us save by His will, and that His will is always inspired by His wisdom and His goodness.

Now faith alone can give us such security. Thus Fontanes used to say of the Bible, which was his favourite book: "Here alone can we find consolation!"

Before the triple problem of death, suffering, and the inequalities and injustices of this world, a problem which no science can ever conceal, philosophy is dumb.

But faith speaks and convinces us that there is another life, beside which this is as nothing—for this life passes and the other is eternal.

In the other life all will be rewarded according to full and perfect justice: each will receive according to his works. He who weeps, laments, and is afflicted sows for eternity!

And faith adds: The reward is out of all proportion to the trial; it surpasses it so greatly: *momentaneum* et leve tribulationis nostræ supra modum in sublimitate æternum gloriæ pondus operatur in nobis.*

* For that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory.—*Second Epistle to Corinthians* iv. 17.

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Those who die before you, continues faith, are not lost to you : *vita mutatur, non tollitur*.* They set out before you, they will await you ; you will shortly see them again !

Moreover, they are happy, they think of you, they pray for you. Between you there is still communion of life and affection. Death, which Renan called " odious, hateful, senseless," is for you a deliverance and the beginning of eternal life.†

And to make these assertions still more striking faith incarnates them in a reality, not only living, but at once human and divine ; it shows you Christ crucified, it leads you to the feet of Him who, to make your Cross lighter, was the first to carry it, who attached Himself thereto, and rose again after having suffered, in order to give an unshakable foundation to your consolations and hopes.

The fact is undeniable, and so obvious that I will not linger over it ; while philosophy has been powerless to heal broken hearts, faith has for twenty centuries affected prodigies of consolation amidst the innumerable trials and crushing sorrows of this life.

" O celestial faith ! consoling faith ! " cried Chateaubriand, " thou dost more than move mountains, thou dost remove the crushing weight which burdens the body and the heart of man ! "

Finally, in the order of *action* and *life*, the

* Office of the Dead, Preface of the Mass.

† A Father of the Church, in speaking of St. Felicity, who was present at the martyrdom of her seven children, says : " Non amittebat sed præmittebat " (she did not lose them, but sent them before her).

superiority of faith over philosophy is still more manifest and amazing.

What has philosophy done for the moral reform of humanity, for the improvement of man? Nothing, or next to nothing. Its bankruptcy, although less evident, perhaps, or less radical than that of science, is none the less complete. All attempts to found a system of morals without the aid of faith will always be in vain.

A very noble system may be found in a work entitled "To my Sons." But we must bear in mind two things concerning it: first, that it is simply borrowed from the Gospels and has already been given to the world during twenty centuries; and further, that when separated from dogma it loses all its obligatory force, and has but the value of an individual opinion.

The author of the "Need to Believe" has admirably indicated this: "Upon our faith depends our morality," he concludes. "This is perhaps not clearly understood by those who daily attack belief, protesting meanwhile their desire to protect morality. We must not begin by cutting down the tree if we would continue to enjoy the fruits therefrom."

Christian faith has produced humility, chastity, and charity, those three "special" virtues, as Lacordaire calls them, that is to say, not only created by the Gospels, but impossible without faith and its inspirations. Taine went further when he affirmed that "Christianity created the conscience."

Faith does not lose itself in speculation or discussion, as does philosophy: it goes straight to the point; it is essentially practical and

apostolic. "Repent, deny yourselves, love others!" says the Gospel. What a striking contrast to philosophy!

I do not say that believers are always better. In the first place, there are believers hardly worthy of the name; their faith is all external, convention, ceremony.* Faith must not be judged by them.

It is true also that certain believers are not consistent with themselves. Allowance must be made for human weakness.

But it is certain that faith is a check to the passions, and a moral force of the first importance, and that apart from faith there is nothing solid and universal. Littré confessed it when, after reading the life of Pere Ollivaint, he said: "Decidedly such men are worth more than we are."

The least credulous admit as much, in often refusing to take as their life's companion an unbelieving wife. They thus bear witness to the strength of faith as productive of virtue.

Faith as a moralising power is unique and unparalleled; it has proved this during twenty centuries by the heroic and sublime virtues which it has brought into the world, while philosophy is not only powerless, but too often, by destroying faith, has opened wide the door to every sort of disorder and vice.

Moreover, to shake or lessen faith even without destroying it, is to strike a blow at virtue; and the frightful disorders which prepared the

* *Habentes speciem quidem pietatis, virtutem autem ejus abnegantes* (having an appearance indeed of godliness, but denying the power thereof).—*Second Epistle to Timothy* iii. 5.

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Reformation, or which followed it, are the incontestable historic proof of this fact.

Faith, then, not only laid the foundation of moral life, but is and always will be its indispensable groundwork.

What has philosophy done for the family? Ask of Pagan Rome, forced to have recourse to the law, powerless to prevent the dissolution of families. Ask of our modern Rationalists. Already they have established divorce here in France; give them their way, and it will lead to free-love. Many most heartily desire it.

Philosophy prepares the way for the dissolution of the family.

Faith, on the contrary, by the unity and indissolubility of marriage, has always affirmed and maintained, as a sacred and intangible principle, the unity and perpetuity of the family.

What has not the Catholic Church suffered in this cause? Its heart has been torn, it has seen the best of its children desert it. It has borne all things, consented to the most cruel sacrifices, rather than allow the constitutional and fundamental principles of the family to be shaken.

Finally, what has philosophy done for the morals of public life? Here, again, can it bear comparison with faith?

The author already cited states very truly that the need to believe is the "condition of all action, its principle, and mainspring," and that we find faith, a belief, at the origin of all great actions.*

* In the "Genie du Christianisme," Vol. I., chap. II., Chateaubriand expresses the same truth: "Friendship, patriotism, love, all the noble sentiments, are

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He adds that faith is, above all, the condition of common action. As proof he instances the love of country, in which he recognises an unreasoning sentiment which is truly of faith. He further instances Socialism and its apostles. They also, he says, "strive to change their doctrines progressively into beliefs, and at the same time, take note, from the static condition to the dynamic, from the domain of theory to the field of action."

Philosophy argues, faith acts; there is the difference. It is striking, and thus it has been from the beginning of time.

"Faith is so terrible a force," wrote Chateaubriand, "that it would overturn the world if applied to perverse ends. There is nothing which man, when under the yoke of a secret conviction, with his reason voluntarily subject to that of another, is incapable of executing." *

It is because Catholicism is a faith, and the strongest of all, the most united, the most complete, that it is so eminently social.

It is because it is a faith that it has arrested barbarism and civilised the world.

It is because it is a faith that it has covered the earth with its apostles and its institutions,

likewise a species of faith. It was because they believed that such as Codrus, Pylades, and Regulus performed prodigies, and this is why those hearts which believe in nothing, which regard the attachments of the soul as illusions, and noble actions as folly, which look pityingly upon the imagination and tenderness of genius, this is why such achieve nothing great or generous; they have faith only in matter and in death, and are already as insensible as the one and as frozen as the other."

* "Genie du Christianisme," Vol. I., chap. II.

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and during the past twenty centuries has produced those prodigies of charity, morality, and prosperity which wrung from Taine, at the end of his life, a cry of admiration, before what he called "the contribution of Christianity to our modern societies." "The ancient Gospel," he said, "is still to-day the best auxiliary of the social instinct. . . . After nineteen centuries Christianity is still, for a hundred million of human creatures, the great pair of wings without which man cannot rise above himself." *

And before Taine, de Bonald had already protested "against the writers who for the past century have made the Catholic religion the object of their sarcasm . . . these men who have undertaken only to demolish"; and he had celebrated the social benefits of "this religion ever fruitful, ever young," concluding that "rulers and ruled, we owe all to Christianity,

* Here is the whole of this noble passage: "To-day, after nineteen centuries . . . Christianity is still, for a hundred million of human creatures, the spiritual means, the great pair of wings without which man cannot rise above himself. . . . Always and everywhere, for nineteen centuries, whether these wings have failed or have been broken, public or private morals have been degraded. In Italy during the Renaissance, in England under the Restoration, in France during the Convention and the Directory, we have seen man become pagan . . . cruelty and sensuality were displayed, society became murderous and evil. When one beholds such a spectacle close at hand one can estimate the value of Christianity's contribution to our modern societies. . . . Neither philosophic reason, artistic and literary culture . . . nor any government can fill its place. Nothing else can check us on the fatal slope . . . and the ancient Gospel is still, to-day, the best auxiliary of the social instinct."

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strength, virtue, reason, and knowledge." Let us take his conclusion and make it our own ; it is the natural consequence of what has gone before.

We have established that the need to believe is essential to man ; this we call proof by instinct.

We have established the transcendent superiority of Catholic faith over philosophy in the order of knowledge, of sentiment, and of action. We have shown this not by argument, but by facts, history in hand ; this we call proof by history.

These two incontestable facts, of instinct and of history, support the definition of faith already given. The analysis of the constituent elements of man has led us to recognise in faith the essential and fundamental law of his moral nature.

Instinct and history furnish us with the confirmation of this definition by showing us that man acts as though in spite of himself, under the inspiration of a belief, and that the Catholic belief, to the exclusion of philosophy, has always brought him, in the order of thought, feeling, and action, the principles and inspirations, the strength and the consolation—in a word, all the elements indispensable to his moral life, which is all his glory here on earth.

Hence, if faith is the primordial and indestructible law of man, if Catholic faith has brought him for his mind and heart, for his individual, family, and social life, advantages and benefits which are truly unique and trans-

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cedent, do you not see that faith is not an illusion, an expedient, a subjective necessity, an indispensable hypothesis, but a living truth, or, as certain schools of thoughts would say, an objective reality !

We said that we would not touch upon apologetics, yet we have done so, and to good purpose !

For what are all reasons and arguments worth, however powerful they may be—and they are powerful—beside this striking proof : that Catholic faith is a substantial and living entity, which during twenty centuries has thought, spoken, consoled, sustained, dictated its commands with authority, and given its orders imperially, filling the world with its virtues, its benefits, and its blessings.

This is certainly proof-positive, since it is supported by facts, and is as undeniable as the facts themselves.

This proof, this conclusion, is indeed suggestive, at a time when we see in France an attempt at secularisation, which, as interpreted by some, in the universal and radical sense, must be qualified as criminal, because it is not only a challenge to history, to human nature, and to common sense, but at the same time a sacrifice of interests most sacred to the family, the citizen, and the country, for the benefit of inadmissible ambitions, or of hatreds as anti-social as they are anti-religious.

Here, then, is a religion which has given its proofs : it has enlightened millions of minds, snatching them from barbarism ; it has carried truth to the ends of the earth, to the most savage and uncivilised peoples !

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It is a marvellous instrument for the diffusion of all moral truths, the most important and most essential of all, those which humanity can at no price do without, save at the cost of relapsing into barbarism, and perishing.

It has consoled millions of afflicted hearts, sustained and raised up millions of souls that were prostrate in despair, has dried oceans of tears. It has purified, sanctified millions of lives, preserved union and peace in millions of families.

It has covered the world with its charitable institutions ; it daily provides for thousands of unfortunates. If it were crushed out in France alone, the same day would see a hundred thousand poor creatures in the streets, without counting those cared for in their own homes.

Religion laid the foundations of France ; it has been the cause of her greatness at home and abroad, the source of her wealth and her glory ! It is one of her family traditions, a treasure without price, and without equal. By the testimony even of unbelievers, of all those who, history in hand, like Taine, have given impartial evidence, or who, like Le Play, have been converted by the overwhelming proofs they have found, Christian faith is the foundation of all social prosperity and of all national greatness.

And yet, in the presence of these undeniable facts, we find men so daring as to aim at the overthrow and destruction of faith, men who seek to turn the ignorant and prejudiced masses against faith, by making use of a lying press enslaved by cupidity.

But for what do they stand, these men of a day, as compared with the Church of twenty

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centuries? What is their reason, individual and limited, compared with the reason of the universal Church?

And, further, where are their works, their charities, their doctrines, their guarantees? Where are their virtues, and where their gospel?

We clearly see the ruin which they daily work, but have yet to see fulfilled the idle promises with which they lure the credulity of the masses.

Amidst the storms and tempests of this world, amidst the surging waves of human disorders and the ever-rising tide of all the passions they unloose, the unbridled appetites they excite, we have the Holy Ark, the Catholic Church, as our refuge and salvation from the wreck. They seek to destroy it! . . . and offer nothing in its place—no spar, no fragment even, to which we may cling! It is this which is criminal and unpardonable.

But, as Garcia Moreno cried to his assassins: "God does not die!" God watches over us, and prepares for us a new and magnificent demonstration of Catholic faith. God leaves His enemies free to complete their nefarious work, to heap ruin upon ruin, the better to show the ineptness of their efforts and the security of His Church, that the beauty of the Holy Ark may be seen by all, and that all may understand the irresistible necessity of faith for individual and social salvation.

And now what remains but that all should unite, in the strength of their indignation, against these unfortunate men who touch with ruthless hands the social structure? It is no question of striking back, nor of crushing them in turn. The right of vengeance belongs to God

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alone ; *mihi vindicta, ego retribuam*. It is rather to enlighten them, to convert them, if it still be possible. It is, at all events, for us to rescue France from the hands which would destroy her, thereby restoring her faith and her dignity.

It behoves us to unite mind, heart, and will in a single, living, active faith, to devote all that God has given of strength, leisure, fortune, and ability to the triumph of His cause, and the salvation of souls.

And now, as our immediate programme, we cannot do better than meditate, and interpret in action, the words of a Catholic orator, M. Piou, at Augoulême : " The spirit of faith alone can curb and subdue the spirit of negation. When incredulity, by means of one success after another, finally presents itself as the incarnation of supreme reason, as the liberator of consciences enslaved by dogma, one Voice alone has the power to speak with even greater authority : the Voice which was heard on Mount Sinai and on Calvary. The Decalogue and the Gospel alone can teach the uncertain, troubled throng the source where the human mind will find a plenitude of light, and the human conscience a plenitude of moral greatness."

IV

OUR DUTIES TOWARD FAITH

Sine fide, impossibile est placere Deo (But without faith it is impossible to please God)—Epistle to the Hebrews, xi. 6.

IF I have insisted at length upon the nature and the general benefits of faith, if I have proved to you at length, by means of analysis and by facts, that is to say, by a method wholly experimental and scientific, that faith, and especially Catholic faith, is the essential law of the moral man, you know my reasons for so doing.

At a time when faith is not merely attacked, but distorted and travestied in so many ways, it is necessary to give a clear idea of it.

If, with God's grace, I have been so happy as to succeed, it will be in itself a great service rendered to all.

And the practical conclusions which we shall proceed to deduce from these preliminaries will be all the more manifest and urgent. For the moment I shall confine myself to the following : You have *duties* toward faith ; by what *means* will you fulfil them ?

You have duties toward faith. Is not this the obvious result of what I have already said ? Need we prove it again ?

Yes, let me insist upon it, for the obstinate few who deny it theoretically, and for the many

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indifferent who deny it practically, I mean, who do not act in accordance with faith.

Those who deny it theoretically argue thus : I admit duties toward faith for those who have faith ; for faith imposes obvious obligations upon them from which they cannot escape without transgressing and incurring the blame of their consciences. But if I have no faith, how can I have duties toward a thing which does not exist for me ?

This position, wherein the unbeliever entrenches himself, is untenable. What is a duty ? It is an obligation which it is *possible* to fulfil. Obligation is the essence of duty. A duty which was optional would no longer be a duty. It might be something advisable, but nothing more.

Now, no one has the right to impose obligations upon us, to issue commands, unless he is superior to us, unless we are dependent on him. This is why, just as all rights are derived from God, so every duty finally reverts to God, and resolves itself into an obligation towards God.

This has escaped the notice of all those who have sought to establish an independent doctrine of moral duties, all those who have sought to construct such a system upon honour, sympathy, interest, or other bases equally fragile. Despoiling the doctrine of its imperative right they have at the same time destroyed its obligatory force ; they have reduced it to nothing by delivering it up to the valuation and caprice of the individual.

There can be no foundation for moral obligation and duty other than God, because in the end we are subject only to Him. God alone

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has the right to show us our obligations, and to impose duties upon us.

And what are these duties? God only can judge; He only will decide, according to the rules of His immutable justice, His admirable wisdom, His adorable goodness.

Drawn from these principles our duties toward faith are in reality duties toward God, which create for us the obligation of attaining to faith.

The whole question resolves itself to this: Does God oblige all men to seek for faith? But how can we doubt that for an instant?

Do not reason and common sense tell us that God has created man to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him? and that man can have no other end than God? Coming from God, man must necessarily return to God, and find in Him at once his happiness and his end.

Man must therefore know, love, and serve God in the degree that God wishes to be known, loved, and served by man.

But if God has manifested Himself, if He became incarnate, if He has spoken, if He has lived in this world, if He has suffered and has died for us, how could we be exempt from the obligation to believe? How could God fail to make it imperative as a duty that we should know by faith all the manifestations of His love and will?

The unbeliever cannot evade this duty by saying: "No one can impose an advantage, a benefit upon me against my will. I remain free to refuse it."

In the first place he must accept all the consequences of his refusal: that is, the loss of eternal welfare and of the happiness that God

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intended for him ; and this alone would condemn him, for it is surely an unreasonable act to forfeit eternal gain and inestimable blessings when it rests wholly with oneself to receive them.

And, further still, if the unbeliever persists in his refusal he outrages God, he disdains Him, he despises not only His favours but His rights. God has a right to his homage, submission, and love, and the unbeliever cannot refuse God that which he owes Him without putting himself grievously in the wrong, without going against his conscience.

In other words, not only are the salvation and interests of the unbeliever at stake, but also the glory, and the sovereign and imprescriptible rights of God.

" God," says St. Paul, " desires that all men should be saved and arrive at the knowledge of truth." The unbeliever is *obliged*, like other men, by this imperative will of God ; he has duties toward God, and therefore toward faith, which God bids him to acquire as the supreme means of knowing, loving, and serving Him, and at the same time of saving himself.

Defeated upon this first point of the definition of duty, the question of its obligation, can the unbeliever fall back upon the second point, alleging its impossibility ?

I have indeed said, and I maintain, that duty is an obligation which it is possible to fulfil. " Deus impossibilia non jubet," says St. Augustine (God does not command the impossible).

Now is it possible for the unbeliever to acquire faith ? If faith depended upon long study, and on learned research, if it required very extensive

knowledge, or extraordinary intelligence, the unbeliever might reply: "It is quite beyond me," and refuse the duty in question.

But we have shown, and you see it here in a practical application of the highest importance, that faith depends more fully on the heart and will than on reason; and there is a faith—the faith of the simple—which without excluding reason leads rapidly to the goal.

Under these conditions faith becomes possible to all—I add, as is necessary, at least in a certain measure; for there may be men whose environing circumstances make complete and integral faith, Catholic faith, morally impossible, failing a miraculous intervention of God. "*Fides ex auditu*," * said St. Paul; "*quomodo autem audient sine prædicante*." † A savage, for instance, who had never heard of Jesus Christ, evidently could not believe in Him; and he would not be responsible for this want of faith. But he would be responsible for the light and the natural faith which had already been given him, or which he might find in his conscience, and he should long for truth, tend towards it, and seek for it as fully as his conscience prompts him to.

Such is the duty of every man, in whatever surroundings he may be: to seek for light and truth, *in the full measure* of which he is capable, clinging to the light which he already has, in order that he may merit and conquer a superior one.

And when a man lives in the midst of a

* Faith then cometh by hearing.—*Epistle to the Romans*, x. 17.

† And how shall they hear without a preacher?—*Id. Ibid.* 14.

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perfect Christian civilisation, when everything about him speaks of the great fact of revelation ; when the Catholic Church is before his eyes, with its institutions, its acts, its prodigious works of charity ; when he can read the Gospel, the authentic history of Jesus Christ—then, I say, such a man cannot regard with indifference such extraordinary events which for two thousand years have filled the world. I say that if he does not seriously give his attention to the subject, if he does not study it, if he does not seek and do his utmost unceasingly and perseveringly, with the time and means at his disposal, to reach a personal conviction and a moral certitude, then I say such a man cannot justify himself by a claim to good faith.

He is bound to seek to-day, to-morrow, and always, ever untiring, with all his strength : otherwise he sins against light. Success will not always reward him : by the secret dispositions of God he may abide by the way, he may not reach the plenitude of Catholic faith ; but an effort is always possible, and always commanded, always obligatory.

This constant and generous application may lead him, if not to entire faith, to Catholic faith, at least to good faith—and I do not venture a play upon words in so grave a connection—to a faith which, being all that is possible to him, will be *good* in the sight of God, and capable of meriting justification and salvation.

Thus every man, even the unbeliever, has duties toward faith, because every man has duties toward God, and God speaks to each one, either from without by Christian Revelation, or from within by means of his conscience.

Every man should reply to God in measure as God speaks to him ; and he alone who has hearkened, and obediently followed each word may lay claim to good faith, because he alone will have fulfilled his whole duty toward faith.

Duties toward faith *oblige* the believer no less than the unbeliever. How many who believe forget this, to the great detriment of their moral life, of which faith is the foundation and principle.

You must *preserve* your faith, *cultivate* it, and *propagate* it.

You must preserve it, for it may be lost. Many have lost their faith ; they have been shipwrecked, says St. Paul : “circa fidem nan-fragaverunt.” *

In all times this disaster has been seen, but more often than ever during the last three centuries. Not only conspicuous examples, such as Luther and Lamennais, but many obscure instances, such as all have seen with their own eyes, should make you tremble for yourselves and your children. Do you think of this sufficiently ? How many fathers, in all sincerity, would be bound to say : “I am responsible, at least in a certain measure, for the incredulity of my son ! ”

The faith of your sons is the offspring of your own, its continuation ; will you destroy your own work ?

You have given your sons the life of the body ; will you deprive them of the life of the soul ?

Infanticide is an atrocious crime. There is a spiritual infanticide more horrible still ! It is to kill the soul of your child, to kill his faith !

Do you interest yourselves in this capital

* *First Epistle to Timothy*, i. 19.

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point of education? Do you realise the influence, almost irremediable, which may be brought to bear upon a young man's faith by a particular college, a certain professor, a comrade, a book, an example, a word of your own, a doubt, an objection, a jest?

You prize the health of your children, you are anxious concerning their success, their future, their marriage, their fortune. Are you sufficiently so concerning their faith? It is, however, the most important of all!

Without complete loss, faith may become troubled, impaired, diminished, and weakened; and this again is an immense misfortune.

If you feel your strength failing as age and infirmities come upon you, you are indeed sad. If you see your child growing anæmic, pining away, if its life is in danger, you are stricken to the heart!

Faith is the life of the soul: lament its decrease, dread its decline, be watchful lest this pale light, already flickering, should be extinguished by the first breath of the passions!

To preserve your faith and that of your children is not enough. You must cultivate it, in the first place lest it should perish, and lest you should lose it—for a plant without care rapidly withers—but also that it may mature and thrive.

Faith has an infinite number of degrees of which we shall presently speak; and a bare faith must not content you.

Your own interests demand this care, for faith will repay you a hundredfold. The light, the consolation, the living strength that it will bestow upon you will increase as it increases.

Faith is your spiritual treasure : in adding to it you will increase your moral wealth, in this world and in the next. For one may say of faith what St. Paul said of piety, which is its fruit : “ Ad omnia utilis est, promissionem habes vitæ quæ nunc est et futuræ.”* Your blessings, your rewards, your joys on high will be in proportion to your faith here below.

The interests of God, His sovereign rights, also require that you should cultivate your faith, for it is by faith that God wishes to be known, loved and served ; it is by faith that you please Him and glorify Him and most magnificently praise Him, and it is through faith that you may most perfectly accomplish His will.

The cultivation of faith will be the task of your whole life. It should never cease, because it is always possible to increase faith, so that a limitless field is here open to your activity. Your eternal merits will be greater, and God's glory will be increased by you according to the perseverance and generosity of your efforts.

And, finally, you have duties toward the faith of others ; I mean that you ought to *propagate* faith.

This you should do because the propagation of faith is possible and obligatory. It is possible, as I shall presently show, indicating numerous authorised means which have stood their trial and are within reach of all men of good-will.

It is obligatory, just as alms-giving is, in the name of the evangelical law, indeed one might

* It is profitable to all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.—*First Epistle to Timothy*, iv. 8.

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say the *human* law, of charity. And charity is a matter of obligation according to the measure of your wealth, the poverty of your neighbour, and the greatness of the benefit to be conferred.

Now, faith is the gift of gifts, for it is the key to all spiritual treasures, to the riches that never pass away. Moreover, at the present time our fellow-citizens, our brothers, all those in whose midst we live, are more devoid of faith than ever; their destitution is appalling.

This double motive renders the propagation of faith more pressing than ever, and sets it among your most serious and urgent duties.

Your duties toward faith are just as certain as they are numerous. You must acquire it, preserve it, cultivate it, propagate it. You have all undeniable obligations, from which none can escape, whatever their state of mind and soul. There are no more important and urgent duties at the present time, therefore I will now point out in detail the *means* whereby you can accomplish them.

In the first place you must fight the enemies of faith; otherwise all your efforts to acquire or develop faith will be in vain.

Faith has formidable enemies, enemies which attack you both from *within* and *without*.

Within there are three terrible enemies, three vices, which unceasingly tend to destroy faith, or to prevent its growth: they are pride, a vice of the mind, impurity, a vice of the flesh, and indifference, a vice of the heart and will.

Why is pride an adversary of faith, an almost insurmountable obstacle in the way of acquiring it? Because the proud man makes his reason

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the measure of all things. Now, as we have seen, faith is beyond the scope of reason. We need the co-operation of other faculties to acquire it. Above all, unsubmissive reason, the reason of the proud, is fundamentally incapable of rising to faith. This reply should suffice.

But there are yet others. The proud man is independent, he is unwilling to recognise either superiority or an obligatory law. Now, faith is a surrender of the mind, an act of humility and of dependence. The proud man will never admit that he is wrong ; and when he once has rejected an idea, or a system, will never reconsider it. To retract, to disown his words, would mean a humiliation to which he will not submit.

How can faith be attained under these conditions ? Truth is immovable, it is unchanging. It cannot adapt itself to your mind. It is your mind that must shape itself to truth and become like unto it.

The proud man, on the contrary, does not see things as they are, but as he would have them. He judges truth, he leads it before his tribunal, he would make it conform to his individual reason. Truth passes him by in disdain.

When we read the works of the philosophers who have repudiated faith, or who have distorted it, we find in all of them one of those forms of pride and one of these accusing signs, the source of their errors and their sophisms.

We hear them boasting, in the words of one amongst them, that they do not bow their reason before anyone or anything. " I would

accept from no one but myself," writes Taine, "my rule of conduct, and the guidance of my thoughts. . . . Pride and the love of liberty had freed me." Here is a candid avowal.*

Many men of the world could reproach themselves in like manner! There is not only the haughty and stubborn pride of the writer, the thinker, or the self-made man; there is a subtle pride which a man may hide under appearances of real modesty and goodness: it is the attachment to one's own thoughts, ideas, and judgments, a confidence in self, a self-love, in short, which constitutes what is sometimes called a gentle obstinacy. You will even find men without will-power in the conduct of life, men who are led by their wives and their children, yet who intrench themselves within a narrow circle of ideas from which no one can make them depart, and of which they admit no discussion—an attitude the more impervious in that their prejudices are all that is left to them—and therein they shut themselves up as in an impregnable fortress. Is there not here again a secret pride which may well be an obstacle to faith? Each man must answer for himself: and it is for God to judge us all.†

* "Hippolyte Taine," by Lucien Roure. Lethiellieux.

† Fenelon has admirably explained the necessary share of humility in faith: "Why regret light which consoles the heart, because it is mingled with shadows that humble the mind? Should not true religion at once raise man and abase him, show him together his greatness and his weakness? Christianity is not only a sacred law that purifies the heart: it is also a mysterious wisdom which subjects the mind. It is a continual sacrifice of the whole self to the glory of the sovereign reason. In practising its morality man renounces pleasures for love of the supreme beauty. Believing its mysteries he

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Impurity is the second enemy of faith, and for many reasons. In the first place because faith is the enemy of impurity : it condemns it, it threatens it with severest punishment. To the sensualist it is importunate, a sword of Damocles from which he turns away.

sacrifices his own ideas out of respect for the eternal truth. Without this double sacrifice of thoughts and passions the holocaust is imperfect, the victim is defective. It is by this means that the entire man disappears and ceases to be before the Being of beings.

" There is no need to ask if it is necessary that God should thus reveal to us mysteries that humble the mind ; the question is whether He has done so or not. If He has spoken to His creature obedience and love are inseparable. Christianity is a fact. Since you do not doubt the proofs of this fact, you must no longer choose what you will and what you will not believe.

" All the difficulties of which you have given examples vanish as soon as the mind is cured of presumption. Then there is no difficulty in believing that there is in the divine nature and in the direction of Providence a profundity impenetrable to our feeble reason. The infinite Being must be incomprehensible to His creatures. On the one hand we see a legislator whose law is wholly divine, who proves his mission by miraculous deeds which we cannot doubt for reasons as strong as those we have for believing them. On the other hand we find several mysteries which offend us. What are we to do between these two embarrassing extremities of a clear revelation and an incomprehensible darkness ? We find no resource but in the sacrifice of the mind, and this sacrifice is part of the worship due to the sovereign Being. Has not God infinite knowledge which we have not ? When He makes known something of this by natural means we should no longer examine the wherefore of these mysteries, but the certitude of their revelation. They seem to us incompatible without really being so, and this apparent incompatibility comes from the smallness of our minds, which have not knowledge extensive enough to see the connection between our natural ideas and these supernatural ideas."—Fenelon to Mr. de Ramsay, a convert to Catholicism.

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And as through his conscience faith gives him no rest, he can only escape by destroying it. He condemns faith that it may not condemn him. "And men," says the Gospel, "loved darkness rather than the light : for their works were evil. He that doth truth cometh to the light. . . . For every one that doth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, that his works may not be reprovèd." *

Light takes its revenge ; in turn it flees from man. Truth disdains and escapes him ; he becomes incapable of comprehending it. "Animalis homo," says St. Paul, "non percipit ea quae sunt spiritus Dei" † (The sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God).

And already the Prophet had said : "Supercecidit igius et non viderunt solem" ‡ (The fire fell upon them and they saw the sun no longer). What fire, asks St. Thomas Aquinas ? The fire of concupiscence. Their passions have robbed them of truth. Just as when clouds cover nature with a thick veil and hide the sun, so all the passions of the flesh and the senses, like black and gloomy vapours, rise from the depths of concupiscence and deprive the soul of the sight of God and truth. The beatitude of the pure in heart (*beati mundo corde, quoniam ipse Deum videbunt* §) is changed to a malediction against the impure : their impurity prevents their seeing God.

* *St. John* iii. 19-21.

† *First Epistle to Corinthians* ii. 14.

‡ *Psalms* lvii. 9.

§ Blessed are the clean of heart : for they shall see God.—*St. Matt.* v. 8.

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Indifference is the third enemy of faith. Faith, as we have shown, is not a proof which forces itself upon you ; it is a certitude which you must conquer by the triple action of the reason, the heart, and the will. The idleness of the indifferent man will prevent his acquiring and cultivating faith. It leaves him in ignorance, and ignorance makes him more indifferent than ever, sometimes even hostile or prejudiced, because his mind is full of error, presumption, inaccurate half-truths, objections of all sorts, which he has met with here and there, and which have left their mark upon him.

Indifference, impurity, pride : these are the three enemies of faith. They are its enemies for the reasons already given, and for still another, common to all three, and which I beg you take note of.

Man does not appear as sole agent in faith : God has His part therein. Faith is an alliance between God and man, a veritable friendship.

Now the essence of friendship is freedom. God gives Himself to whom He pleases, and as He pleases. Doubtless God wishes to give Himself to all men, but on condition that they give themselves to Him ; there must be exchange and reciprocity. Now, the proud, the indifferent, the impure refuse themselves to God ; they voluntarily separate themselves from God. How could God give Himself to them ?

Thus the three vices of man are enemies to faith, and faith is in turn their enemy. The enmity is reciprocal and unavoidable.

The proud, the sensual, and the indifferent will never attain to faith ; and have they once

had it they will most certainly lose it, or such faith as they retain will be dull, lifeless, and powerless to save them.

The experience of all converts proves as much. The provost of a well-known French college, who had lived a stranger to religion, died a Christian a few years ago at the age of fifty-nine, and on his death-bed declared—and begged the chaplain to speak of it generally—that if he had not sooner become a practising Christian pride alone was responsible.* Others have owned that their passions alone had blinded them; others again that indifference had kept them from the truth.

All have stated, each in his own way, that faith is a conquest of virtue, and that humility, purity, and love are the first and indispensable conditions of faith.

It is for this reason, alas! that so many young people lose their faith.

In a youth of eighteen or twenty all that is contrary to faith comes to life. His reason, born of yesterday, unformed, as yet without experience, becomes proud and personal. His reason, all the more arrogant in that it knows nothing—for only true knowledge makes a man modest—his reason starts up in opposition to the universal Church, and to the reason of all the geniuses and all the saints who have glorified the Catholic faith. A newspaper article means more to him than the Gospel. He prefers the word of a corrupt comrade to the incorruptible word of Jesus Christ. His reason is prejudiced because it is proud and self-infatuated.

* "Le Péché d'Incroyance," by P. Badet, XIV., p. 338.

At the same time his senses are aroused, and make felt their ardent curiosities, their eager desires. Forbidden fruit is ever close at hand, seduction clothes itself in all its most perfidious borrowed charms to attract and to solicit him.

Only a living faith, deep-rooted, and to which the heart was solidly attached, could give the necessary support, the required strength for resisting. But alas ! ignorance and indifference deprive him of this last refuge and open wide the way to his defeat.

He loses the faith of his mother, of his first communion, and with it his innocence and the purity of his heart. Poor soul ! in his senseless vanity he has aimed as high as Heaven, and down he falls into the mire of all the vilest instincts !

Pride, indifference, and impurity are the most terrible adversaries of faith. They always harm and mutilate it, even when they do not entirely destroy it. And when a man is without faith they inevitably prevent him from attaining to it.

Faith has other enemies which come from without, and which are no less to be feared and guarded against. With what care do you preserve your health, this temporal life, against all climatic changes, and those all-pervading microbes which might cause your death ! What precautions, often exaggerated and ridiculous, you take for its preservation !

Are you as careful to preserve your faith, which is the health of your soul, its very life—for if you wilfully lose your faith you lose the life of your soul—against the contagious all-permeating atmosphere of the *conversations* and *examples* of the world ?

Do you wish to understand the whole danger ? On returning home, after an evening spent in the world, seat yourself before your desk, concentrate your thoughts, and quietly recall what you have heard and sum it up in writing. Then open the Gospel at the Beatitudes ; read and compare. On your paper you will find : “ Blessed are the rich ; blessed are those who laugh and are immersed in pleasure ; blessed are those who have nothing to suffer ; blessed are those who succeed, those who are honoured by the world ! Youth must have its pleasures, and youth passes ! ”

In the Gospel, on the contrary, you will find : “ Blessed are the poor . . . Blessed are they that mourn . . . they that suffer . . . Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you . . . Blessed are the clean of heart.”

In every particular the contrast is striking. In word, attitude, and example the world is the open and permanent contradiction of the Gospel. There is the danger for faith ! It is in the very air which you breathe.

When the sun shines on the country surrounding Rome, with that transparency peculiar to the glorious sky of Italy, you set out gaily, your soul rejoicing, for an excursion across the Campagna. But at the end of the day, at nightfall, you return heavy-headed, filled with a vague, indescribable discomfort. The fever is upon you—*malaria* the natives call it ; that is to say, the *bad air* which you have inhaled.

Now since there likewise exists a moral *malaria*, you must be ever on your guard, ever armed with antidotes against the conversations and examples of the world.

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Dangerous microbes are not only in the air, they are also to be found in food. With what care you avoid all that is suspicious or doubtful ! And if, nevertheless, something contaminated finds its way into your system, what havoc it works there !

Are you as careful to protect your mind from the deadly poison of evil books ?

You say : " These books are read by all, one sees them everywhere."

Would you use the same argument with regard to bodily nourishment ? Then why deceive yourselves by such a piece of sophistry when it concerns your soul ?

Do you think that your mind can better resist these treacherous poisons than your body ?

And because others pervert, distort, and lose their faith, need you ? When will you cease to follow one another, like sheep, in the paths of evil and of error ?

When Dante saw Francesca and Paolo drifting through the Gehenna of adulterers, he asked her how she had been led to sin. Then she explains that she had been prompted thereto by the romance of Lancelot of the Lake, where Galahad plays the part of a vile go-between for the two lovers. And Francesca, with a cry of anguish, adds : " A Galahad the book, and he that wrote ! "

Galahad attacks not morals only, but also faith, and Galahad is legion : he is everywhere. He hides, dissembles, and thereby becomes more dangerous. A frank and open attack upon faith could be repelled ; its very strength would be its weakness. But an opportune objection,

an insinuated doubt, a skilful blow aimed by some superficial person, will harm you more because you will be off your guard, and your defence less ready ; because, too, at the time you will not even feel the injury you receive. Beware therefore of dangerous reading !

People in the best of health are sometimes seized with dizziness or vertigo. It may mean nothing, and it is best to take no notice, this being the surest way to overcome the difficulty ; it passes of itself.

Or, again, it is a sign of weakness, of imperfect digestion, and certain timely remedies will serve to arrest the evil or to avoid one more serious.

It may happen in like manner that faith, and often the most steadfast faith, has its moments of vertigo. There are times when we are disconcerted ; the mind seems befogged, we *doubt*. What is to be done ?

We must distinguish between *vague* doubt and *definite* doubt.

Vague doubt is that which crosses the mind without apparent cause, one knows not why. Is it true that Jesus Christ is God, or that the Church is infallible ? The idea goes no further, it is unsupported by any argument. This doubt is ordinary, one might say universal ; few minds have not experienced it at a given moment, and some it pursues with incredible tenacity.

The wisest course is to pay no attention, to despise it. Make an act of faith concerning the truth in question, and take no further notice. Such doubts often persist because of your very dread of them, as vertigo increases the more one thinks of it.

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Whether it is due to the personal infirmity of a naturally wavering mind, or whether it is a temptation, permitted by God to try you, in either case you will resist it by contempt and the inward affirmation of your faith. Far from lessening your faith, this sort of doubt only strengthens it, by giving it occasion to come forward and express itself.

Definite doubt is that which is stated in a definite objection, such as could be expressed by word of mouth or in writing. In this case you should follow other tactics. If possible you should enlighten yourself, obtain the solution to your difficulty from some book or authorised person. It is dangerous to let objections accumulate and fill the mind without replying to them : faith may all at once break down beneath too heavy a burden.

On the other hand, you must not try to make all clear, to explain all things. Do not forget that there are mysteries in religion, as in nature, as in science, as everywhere ; and do not join that melancholy, narrow-minded school who admit only what they comprehend, and reject certain doctrines as a whole because of some slight difficulty, just as a man might fancy his house about to collapse on account of a crack in the wall.

Hold to the broad lines : see things as a whole, recall to mind the authentic proofs of the principal truths of religion, and never allow yourself to be shaken by minor objections.

It is not enough to fight the enemies of faith, pride, impurity, indifference, conversations, reading, examples, doubts, enemies without and enemies within ; you must further take direct

and efficacious means to acquire, cultivate, and propagate faith. What are these means?

Faith, we have seen, is a *human* act and a *Divine* act in one. God and man are both party to it, so you must employ both human means and Divine.

The *human* means of *acquiring* and *cultivating* faith consist in the *study* of *religion* and the *practice* of *righteousness*, because you must enlighten the mind and exercise the heart and will; for, as we have proved, faith exacts the co-operation of man's entire being, the effort of the whole soul.

The *work of the reason* is indispensable, since the rational element is essential to faith. He who seeks faith, just as he who has found it, should therefore endeavour by reading, by study, by listening to the word of God, to obtain a more exact and deeper knowledge—in a word, a more complete knowledge of religion.

There can be no excuse for a man's failing to fulfil this duty. It proceeds inevitably from the principles which we have already established as the undeniable obligation which faith imposes, or, to speak more exactly, which God imposes towards Faith.

This duty is the condemnation of all who neglect to search for truth, or who stop by the way, or who say: "I know quite enough now!"

Whatever your age, your situation, your business, you should never abandon the rational study of religious questions. This is what so many men will not understand or make clear to their sons. This is one of the reasons of the

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deplorable weakness of the faith of so many. Their faith lacks rational force ; it is incapable of self-defence, still less of propagation. It is barely self-sufficing.

This study should not be undertaken at random ; it is not exempt from danger. Arguing reason has ever need of supervision. What subject of study is undertaken without a guide ? What science is learned without a master ? Therefore, turn to the authorised guides and masters and ask of them the direction which you require in this necessary task. They will spare you useless labour, they will save you from error. They will lead you more swiftly and surely to the end in view.

I will add that you must not approach religious study in the same spirit as you would profane. All curiosity, all anxiety, all haste must be banished. You will undertake such study with humility, simplicity, purity of intention, and with a sincere desire to acquire knowledge only for the purpose of becoming better, and of transforming truth into virtue. You will bring to this study the sentiment of your unworthiness, your incapacity, praying God that He will make good your weakness, and enlighten your reason by the reflection of His own.

In this study of religion, in reading the Gospel, you will seek not only food for your reason, but, above all, food for your heart. For true faith is no less in the heart than in the mind, and more extensive knowledge should be transformed into a larger and more generous love. You will endeavour to find what certain Protestants have sometimes so well understood, the spirit

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hidden beneath the letter. You will hearken, as the "Imitation" tells you, to the voice which speaks within. You will imbue yourselves with the *sentiment* even more than with the *knowledge* of Jesus Christ.

Under these conditions you will find, in the course of these necessary studies, light, joy, peace, and surpassing contentment, vital treasures for heart and reason, and the greatest profit for your soul.

The efforts of the heart and will must follow upon those of reason. You will "do the truth," according to the noble words of Scripture. You will be irreproachably faithful to the light given you. You will practise goodness and virtue in proportion as your mind grasps them.

This is the price of your acquisition of faith and its progress. Let us repeat—we cannot too strongly insist on this point—faith is not a conquest of pure reason, but a conquest of the whole soul. The heart and will must always go hand in hand with reason, otherwise truth steals away and reason is led into error. Faith obstinately refuses to be captured by pure reason, it surrenders only to the *whole* soul.

He alone who profits by the light already given can justly lay claim to a superior light, as the traveller upon a winding road sees the stretch beyond each turn only when that which he saw at starting lies behind him.

Truth reveals itself little by little, in proportion as the soul puts into practice what it has already seen. And thus some go on ever gaining fresh light by their fidelity, and their love of light, while others fall ever into greater darkness, and sink day by day into a deeper night

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because of their infidelity, and their contempt for light.*

The human means of acquiring or augmenting faith must be completed by *Divine* means, by *prayer* and the *sacraments*.

In the question before us prayer has two objects.

Firstly, it prepares the soul for faith by placing it in the requisite dispositions for adhesion to the truth.

Prayer, indeed, is an act of concentration, of recollection, by which we turn all our faculties toward God. It is an act of desire, of humility, of confidence. It is an elevation of the mind, the heart, and the will. From all these points of view it marvellously opposes what we call the enemies of faith: pride, impurity, indifference, the worldly spirit. It frees the soul; it produces a most efficacious reaction. Prayer places us in the best possible conditions to receive light and embrace truth.

Moreover, prayer produces a second effect. It conciliates God, it attracts Him. Now, as we have pointed out, faith, such as the Church requires, is impossible without the help of God; and God has promised—the promises of the Gospel are explicit—to give this help to whoever asks it of Him with confidence and perseverance.

How many men would attain to faith if they would pray! And if you tell me: "One must have faith to pray," I reply: "Where is the man who does not at least believe in God? What man cannot pray to God?"

If this phenomenon were to be found—a man

* Ollé-Laprune, "La Certitude Morale," Chap. VII. (2-3), pp. 346-389.

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who did not even believe in God—I should say to him: “ You believe in *truth*, then pray to truth, and even then you pray to God. Pray as did the Athenians to the unknown God! It will still be prayer. Pray conditionally as did Père Gratry, while still at college and still incredulous; cry out, as he did, with all the energy and sincerity of your soul: ‘ O God, if you exist, answer me!’ ”

No man can reasonably assert that it is impossible for him to pray. A certain prayer is always possible; let it be made. For by prayer he will obtain a beginning of light which will enable him to continue, rising ever higher.

As for those who already believe, they will find in prayer a wonderful and rapid increase of faith: not only will they preserve it against its most dangerous enemies, but will daily confirm and augment it.

The sacraments are the last but not the least efficacious means of influencing faith.

The sacraments are for the believer an exercise of his faith, and this exercise alone already strengthens it. You cannot approach the sacraments without calling your faith into action; it is a necessary condition if you would properly receive them. The very effort you make to animate your faith gives it new strength.

But the sacraments fortify faith for another reason, far more potent. They are an effusion of grace and of Divine life in the soul. By means of them, their instrumentality in a way, God is within you. He comes to increase those constituent elements of supernatural life, faith, hope, and charity. So you receive from God

by the sacraments a positive increase of faith, which is capable of development in proportion as your dispositions are fitting.

What culpable negligence you are guilty of in this respect, and what irreparable wrong you do yourselves! When the sacraments are rarely approached can one be surprised by the deplorable weakness of faith which one sees? And, on the contrary, what wonderful results are produced by frequent communions. If you doubt the efficacy of this counsel, follow it generously and sincerely for several months, without discouragement, and you will soon be of my opinion.

Yet to approach the sacraments there is a condition required: you must already have faith. The aim of the sacraments is to increase faith, not to give it. Only the believer can receive a sacrament.

But what faith is requisite? Now here it is most important that there should be no misunderstanding, for there are at the present time, and more numerous than you might think, upright souls, suitably prepared to approach the sacraments, and who absent themselves owing to certain exaggerated scruples which are quite unjustified.

The Abbé de Broglie has treated this question in a few pages of wonderful lucidity and irreproachable theological accuracy. You cannot do better than to read them.*

For my part, I will only remind you that concerning the truths of faith evidence does not

* "Conférences sur la Vie Surnaturelle," 3^e vol., Chapitre: "Des Dispositions pour recevoir les Sacraments."

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necessarily produce adhesion. Remember that faith is not an act of pure reason, but an act in which the heart and will each have an important share.

This granted, if you believe firmly in the authority of the Church, but doubt one of the dogmas which the Church propounds, it rests with you, by an act of will, to reject this doubt, since you have a solid support in the word of the Church, of which you recognise the infallibility.

If your doubts touch upon the Divinity of Jesus Christ, or the infallibility of the Church, or even the fact of Revelation, here again your will can come to the rescue, with the aid of prayer, to transform reasons in favour of Christian faith, which are well founded, but not yet strong enough to be in themselves conclusive, into an act of surrender to God and a definite act of faith. Experience even shows that those who have thus triumphed over certain doubts by strength of will and prayer have been rewarded by the disappearance of those doubts ; and have found in the Sacraments, with the sense of the presence of God, the calm and peace of mind and heart which they had long sought in vain.

In any case, in these grave and delicate conjectures, do not continue to be the judge of yourselves and of your dispositions. Do not bear alone the responsibility of so important a decision.

Go and consult those who by their vocation have known other souls like yours, uncertain in their faith ; explain to them, frankly, your moral condition, and trust to their counsel.

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And, furthermore, I would say, and this need not surprise you—go to confession!

Confession, by itself, is not a sacrament; it is only the beginning and the preparation for one. Unbelievers themselves, the unbaptised, can go to confession. Now confession, from the merely human point of view, is an incomparable institution, a most efficacious means of recalling the heart, the mind, and the will to those dispositions from which they should never have strayed, and of making the whole soul ready, by a process of complete renovation, for the recovery of its original dignity and beauty.

Therefore all should go to confession, if as yet you do not believe there is nothing against it; on the contrary, there are very good reasons for accomplishing this act of courage and moral loyalty, which will bring you nearer to God, and will often open your eyes and give you faith as a reward for your generosity. Père de Ravignan assures us that by his personal experience this is often the case, and any priest would in turn say the same.

Whatever may happen, you will not regret your confession. You will have performed an act of incontestable moral worth, which cannot fail to receive its reward; and you will have proved to yourself anew your honest and courageous sincerity.

How many men have had reason to regret that they have not been to confession! And can a single one be cited who has ever sincerely regretted a confession made?

All that I have hitherto said of the means of acquiring or augmenting faith has reference to your own personal faith. But I have also said

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that you have duties concerning the faith of others. You should apply to yourself the words of the Apostle : " For woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel." * You should then, finally, make use of the means to *propagate* faith. Let us sum them up in a few words.

You will spread faith by your *example* ; that is to say, you will openly profess it, without ostentation, but without weakness or fear of the world's opinion ; above all, you will see that your deeds are consistent with your belief, and that your faith bears those fruits which should always be the proof of its sincerity. You will manifest faith by your virtues. Virtue is the happiest aspect of truth ; truth is never so attractive as when seen through virtue.

At home and abroad, in town and country, wherever you are, your conduct should be the living vindication of your faith. By your example you will make all who see you long for faith, by showing what light, consolation, and strength, what nobility of heart, gentleness of character, what kindness and goodness have their source therein.

You will spread faith by your *words*. Not only will no word against religion and faith ever pass your lips, not only will you avoid those disrespectful and uncharitable criticisms which diminish the weight of authority and unsettle its power, while they weaken the Divine sentiment in souls ; but discreetly, tactfully, without seeming to set anyone right, you will correct false impressions, do battle with prejudices, and overcome difficulties.

* *First Epistle to Corinthians ix. 16.*

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You will destroy sophisms, you will strongly discourage all innovations disapproved by the Church ; you will put others on their guard against those systems which, under cover of science and history, hide the grossest and most dangerous of philosophic errors. You will on every occasion be the vindication of your faith. You will cause others to admire its nature, its beauty ; you will show the incomparable benefits of faith throughout history, and the urgent necessity for faith in modern times. You will point out the dignity of the Church, its authority, its wisdom ; you will try to inspire in others a greater confidence and a more ready submission.

There are no subjects of conversation into which you cannot insinuate a remark, an allusion, a word in favour of faith. *Fides ex auditu*.* It is by word of mouth that you received faith. It was from the lips of a Christian mother that its first accents reached you ; thus in turn you must propagate faith by your words.

You will spread faith by means of books, if you know how to write.

What a magnificent ministry is open to the man of talent, that of using his pen for the propagation of religious truth. It is indeed a privilege to follow in the train of the numerous men of genius who have enlightened the world, who have shone as gleaming beacons across the ever-changing tides of error and incredulity, leading to port all souls of good-will.

According to your talent give out your measure of light, if only by an occasional article for a paper or review.

* *Epistle to Romans* x. 17.

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Words pass, books remain. By a book you will outlive yourself, and after you have left this world your work will still abide to continue the "good fight" in the cause of truth and justice.

Spread faith again by your *alms*, by supporting spiritual works whose aim is to make faith known. Material charities are necessary and excellent, but spiritual charities are better still. The latter surpass the former as the soul surpasses the body, as the riches that perish not surpass the riches that perish, as eternity surpasses time.

These very obvious principles are not sufficiently understood in our day. The necessity, the urgency for material hospitals is keenly felt, and indeed most rightly so. But the importance of the moral hospital is not so well understood, the urgent necessity of enlightening minds by the diffusion of instruction suitable to every age; the necessity of Catholic schools, clubs, missions, colleges, and institutes, publications, journals, and good books, popular lectures, all those institutions, in a word, whose aim is to propagate faith, are not sufficiently supported by Catholics. Those who have gone to the front and generously shown the way must feel that they have the approval, and the firm, practical support of the mass of believers. Every man should become a *leader*, and persuade others to follow.

Finally, spread faith by your works, and your *personal action*.

If you can—and many could with a little good-will—turn lecturer both in town and country; multiply true and fruitful thoughts

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by public speaking. Or, at the very least, teach the catechism to young and old alike, to all who are in ignorance. And remember always, that to all material aid you must add the *word of life*, and that the bread of the soul should never be severed from that of the body.

Do not be surprised at the multitude and gravity of your duties toward faith, of which I have just recalled the most important.

Faith is for everyone the question of questions. It affects your essential and vital interests. "But without faith it is impossible to please God,"* says the Apostle. "But he that doth not believe," says Jesus Christ, "is already judged."†

Without faith your soul is dead, dead to the higher life of a Christian, dead to the divine life. With faith, on the contrary, you live.

Faith is the bond of our union with God, the seal of our mutual alliance. Faith is the key to the treasures of grace, and to the gate of Heaven.

At the same time, in the purely human order, it is the fruitful and unique source of all moral greatness, all elevation of thought and soul, all generous, persevering conduct.

Faith is thus at the root of all morality, and the base of all virtue, it is their unshakable foundation. Nothing is of more importance to you, hence the many, the urgent, the practical duties which are connected with it.

Consider faith in its nature, its benefits, in

* Sine fide impossibile est placere Deo.—*Epistle to Hebrews* xi. 6.

† Qui autem non credit jam judicatus est.—*St. John* iii. 18.

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the magnificent promises which it makes you, and you will no longer think that it asks too much of you, for what it asks is nothing to what it brings you.

To work, then, since there is no work more fruitful, more pressing, none finer, none more worthy of your hearts! Work each day to acquire, to preserve, to cultivate, to spread faith! And, thanks to you, to your perseverance, modern unbelievers, free-thinkers and such, will miserably fail in their detestable effort to secularise the human soul. They will in vain oppose the great current of religious needs and beliefs which revert to the birth of humanity, and find their source in the origin of the world, in the inexhaustible wisdom and goodness of God Himself. Yes, thanks to you, human faith, Catholic faith, will ever flow on as a noble river, amidst our trials and sufferings, our anxieties and misfortunes. It will continue on its way, ever fruitful, all-powerful, wholly undaunted, overcoming the barriers raised by impiety, even finding therein a new force, a greater power with which to hurry us on towards that boundless ocean of eternal light and life.

V

THE SPIRIT OF FAITH

Justus ex fide vivit (The just man liveth by faith).—*Epistle to Romans*, i. 17.

I have yet to speak of a final duty toward faith. It is the necessary consequence, the indispensable issue of all the others. Your faith must be active.

Activity is the proof of life, and, at the same time, it increases life.

A man in good health requires exercise ; this proves that he is well, and exercise in turn fortifies his health.

It is the same with faith. If sincere it will prove it by action, and will thereby gain in strength and life.

Faith must not remain inactive. It must pass from theory to practice : it is the condition of its growth and sincerity. You must not be content with preserving and cultivating it, you must still further, and above all, exercise it, animate it. You should—and I would have you grasp the full force of this thought—you should transform your faith into the spirit of faith.

What is the spirit of faith ? And what unrivalled advantages will it bring you ? That is what we will now examine.

The difference between faith and the spirit of faith is not a difference in kind nor in manner ; essentially they are one and the same thing.

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But there is a difference in degree. The difference between that which is passable and that which is good or very good is immense ; a gulf lies between them.

Human reason may grow or dwindle in astonishing proportions ; and this is even more true of faith.

The madman still retains his reason, in a rudimentary state, of latent power, but it no longer works.

In like manner the sinner may still believe, and retain his faith ; but his faith is no longer active. If it were he would depart from his sin, he could no longer bear to be the enemy of God.

The ignorant man makes use of his reason, but very slightly ; it is, as it were, benumbed ; its activity is reduced to a minimum.

Such is the faith of many Christians. They scarcely make use of it at all ; they merely try to keep within the broadest and most general lines of duty. They make as little of it as possible, and content themselves with what is strictly necessary. Obviously their faith amounts to almost nothing, and this explains their commonplace lives, material, egotistical, full of scandals and perpetual contradictions. They are like people who, setting reason aside, give themselves up to talking nonsense.

The scholar, on the contrary, the philosopher and those who live by mental effort, make a continual use of their reason. They constantly force it into action with an intensity of application which varies according to the intelligence and habits of each. The thinker ever lost in meditation no longer heeds the world about him, and passes all by unseen.

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In like manner the true believer makes a constant use of his faith. Far from bringing it to light only upon Sundays, days of obligation, and great occasions, he makes use of it each day, in the smallest things, and in the most ordinary circumstances. He draws certain conclusions from faith to which he shapes his conduct. He is consistent with himself.

To have the spirit of faith is to make use of faith, to put it into practice, to subject to it all one's thoughts, words, and acts; it is to exercise it and to bring it into action on every occasion.

Listen to the words of Pascal: "When once the mind has seen where truth is to be found, we should penetrate ourselves therewith, and dye our thoughts with that belief ever so ready to escape us." *

So it is not enough to believe; we must continually rehearse within our minds the truths of faith, otherwise they grow faint, are gradually obscured, and no longer affect either our thoughts or lives.

The infirmity of our reason is such that a thing once understood is rapidly forgotten, and the most brilliant light must be ever cared for, ever renewed under penalty of dying out.

Certain words and forms which at a given moment have meant much to you, and have been fruitful, become empty, lifeless things; they no longer touch you, if you do not in a way re-grasp them by a fresh effort of the mind.

The words of Pascal are therefore very true :

* Pascal, "Pensées."

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we must "penetrate ourselves" with faith, and "dye our thoughts" therein.

Water runs off the surface of iron, it penetrates further into wood, and further still into porous substances. The action of dye is stronger than that of water; it not only penetrates a substance, but remains within it and becomes fixed.

To have the spirit of faith is not only to steep the mind in faith, but to take on the very colour of faith.

Maine de Biran also uses this simile: "Truths," he says, "should become a part of us, and should wholly penetrate us, even as dye soaks little by little into wool. There is a gradual penetration day by day, a process of nutrition by means of truth which should continue throughout the whole of life; and thus truth becomes to our soul as the light of the sun to our eyes, their beacon, though all unsought." And he further says: "When we delve into truth, imbued with the desire to fathom it, truth in turn works upon us and penetrates the very substance of our soul. Then only does it become practical and as a part of ourselves: otherwise our noblest, most heartfelt sentiments, our most earnest resolutions, all our views, although seemingly clear and distinct for the moment, are but vain shadows, passing phantoms." *

Would you go to the very root of this doctrine? Do you wish to know its final word? You must ask it of St. Paul. To have the spirit of faith is to *live* by faith: *justus ex fide*

* Maine de Biran, *Journal Intime*, 17 Nov., 1820—Oct., 1823.

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vivit. But what does this mean, to live by faith ?

Every created being, having no life of itself, has need of food, and this food positively becomes the life of the being which assimilates it. Now the soul, like the body, has need of food. "Not in bread alone doth man live," said Jesus Christ, "but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God." * There is the food of the soul ; and it is faith which, by giving it that food, gives it life : *justus ex fide vivit*. To have the spirit of faith is to be nourished by faith, to the extent of living by faith.

We are no longer speaking of a frequent usage, of a constant penetration, of a deep impression, but of a transformation, of the change of one thing into another so that unity is produced. This result in the case of the body, and its food is brought about by the mysterious action of the digestion, whereas in the case of the soul and faith it is produced by man's free-will : the soul is nourished by faith, a mutual transformation takes place, and they are united in one : *justus ex fide*.

Faith becomes as the soul of our soul ; it becomes the true principle of a higher life, a new spirit, the spirit of which our Lord spoke to Nicodemus : "Oportet vos nasci denuo . . . ex aquâ et spiritu." † This spirit is no other than the spirit of God. By faith God unites Himself to man ; the Word Eternal and Divine becomes flesh in us. God, the incarnate God, lives really within us. His thoughts become

* *St. Matt.* iv. 4.

† *St. John* iii. 5.

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our thoughts, His judgments our judgments, His sentiments and aspirations our sentiments and aspirations. Then we no longer lead an egotistical life, material, irregular and useless, but a life that is noble and holy, generous, devoted, useful, and fruitful. We live a higher life, the life of grace, the very life of Christ: *justus ex fide vivit. Vivo, jam non ego, vivi vero in me Christus.* *

Then we see men arise who have, we may say, but the name and appearance of men. They still touch earth, but are no longer of the earth; their conversation, in the latin sense of the word, is of heaven: *nostra conversatio in cœlis est.*† We call them righteous, saintly men, and men of God, because God thinks, speaks, acts, and lives in them. The good which such men do is incalculable; they are the true benefactors of humanity. They are as other Christs, they continue His work of redemption: *Vivit vero in me Christus.* This is the conclusion of the Apostle. It surpasses the scope of reason. One must be initiated to understand. By the spirit of faith we extend the mystery of the Incarnation, Christ is continued in us. We no longer live the life of nature, Jesus Christ lives in us: *justus ex fide vivit. Vivo, jam non ego, vivit vero in me Christus.*

I have shown you in what consists the spirit of faith. But how show you its fruits, how make you see the light, the strength, the consolation, and all the marvellous *advantages* which it brings to you?

* *Epistle to Galatians* ii. 20.

† *Epistle to Philippians* iii. 20.

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In the first place the spirit of faith *illuminates*, and thus transforms all things in our sight.

Before the most wondrous spectacles of nature if the night is dark you see nothing. And if by day the sun is hidden, the sombre veil which covers all things hides their beauty from us. Light is the life and glory of all that this world holds ; without light there is no longer beauty.

And so it is with moral questions and eternal truths. It is faith which illuminates, embellishes, and transforms them. *Argumentum non apparetur.** Faith reveals them to us.

What is God to the philosopher ? A vague notion, inaccurate and uncertain, impossible to define—such as nature is to us under cover of the night. You will find no clear, well-determined idea of God in any philosophic system.

But here is faith which casts its light upon the notion of God. You have but to open the catechism : in two lines God is defined with striking clearness : God is the Supreme Spirit, who alone exists of Himself, and is infinite in all perfections.

Each word is a flash of light. A child may easily understand, and the man of genius halts amazed. Oh, how luminous is faith concerning God !

The *attributes* of God are disfigured by philosophers and worldly people, still more than is His Being.

Certain among them belittle God. They make themselves a God according to their desires, their interests, their passions, a God for whom one need not trouble himself. We

* The evidence of things which appear not.—*Epistle to Hebrews xi. 1.*

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are reminded of the grandfathers drawn by Victor Hugo, who were good for nothing but to spoil their grandchildren, laugh at their follies, and admire their caprices.

And, furthermore, they are quite casual with Him ; they would not themselves keep a servant a month who treated them as they habitually treat Him.

It is such who repeatedly cry : “ God is too good to condemn me ! ”

At the other extreme are those who have made themselves a terrible God, ever threatening, a Jupiter forever armed with thunderbolts and lightning. They dare not approach Him, but regard Him only from afar, in fear and trembling, or else they do not think of Him at all, in order not to fear Him.

And both are in the dark. But here is the light of faith ! Faith preserves us from either extreme, and gives us the most true and complete notion of God. It throws a dazzling light upon two of His principal attributes, which balance one another and reveal Him to us in all His perfection : His *justice* and His *goodness*.

Illumined by faith the *justice* of God appears to us in all its incorruptible splendour.

What does faith tell us ?

That certain of the angels revolted, rebelled against God, and were immediately hurled into the eternal depths.

That our first parents grievously disobeyed God, and were driven out from Paradise, condemned to ignorance, to concupiscence, suffering, and death ; and all posterity was forever involved in the same punishment.

That a man who resists God, refuses to obey

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His laws, and dies in this attitude of revolt, is condemned to eternal suffering.

That Jesus Christ, the Just, the Holy, takes upon Himself our sins, the sins of the world. Instantly he becomes "accursed" in the eyes of God. The Father no longer sees His well-beloved Son; He sees in Him only sin, and He smites, overwhelms, and crushes Him beneath the weight of expiatory suffering as the grape is crushed in the wine-press : *attritus est propter scelera nostra*.*

How luminous is faith concerning the justice of God !

Let us now consider His *goodness* ! *Sic Deus delexit mundum ut Filium suum unigenitum daret !*†

Faith shows us at Bethlehem a God who becomes a child for our sake, a God wrapped in swaddling-clothes and lying in a manger : *infantem pannis involutum et positum in præsepio* ; ‡ a child who smiles on us, holds out His arms and bids us come to Him.

Faith shows us at Nazareth an adolescent God, obscure, passing thirty years of His life in labour, obedience, and prayer—and this for love of us.

Faith shows us a God voluntarily humiliated, suffering, pierced with nails and thorns, His flesh torn by scourges ; a God dying for our salvation in ignominy, a prey to most atrocious sufferings.

* He was wounded for our transgressions.—*Isaiah* liii. 5.

† For God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son.—*St. John* iii. 16.

‡ *St. Luke* ii. 12.

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Faith shows us a God continuing amongst us, renewing each day, and thousands of times, His incarnation, His sufferings, and His death in an admirable mystery ; the Eucharists—a mystery which baffles reason, but which fills our hearts with enthusiasm because of its unfathomable depths of love and devotion.

Faith shows us a God multiplying His works and His prodigies to still further load us with favours ; a God responding to our prayers according to an infallible promise ; a God instituting visible signs as the instruments and channels of His grace ; a God increasing the number of His ministers in order to increase His benefits : finally, a God surpassing, in the admirable inventions of His love, all that we could ever have conceived in our most daring dreams.

How luminous is faith concerning the *goodness* of God !

If there were only His justice you would be blinded by its radiance, and dismayed by its severity ; you would flee from God, you would do all in your power to avoid thought, you would close your eyes that you might not see.

If there were only His goodness you would lose all fear and all respect ; you would be careless of obedience, and in your deplorable weakness and your profound egotism you would no longer consider God save to abuse His goodness and profane His gifts.

But consider the admirable fusion of these two lights, the sublime harmony of these two attributes !

Justice bows your spirit in profound adoration in unreserved fear and respect. But, thanks to

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goodness, there is in this nothing servile, all is filial.

The goodness of God invites you to the most absolute confidence, the sweetest, most intimate and tenderest of friendships ; but thanks to justice there is no longer carelessness, no abuse of His love and its benefits.

Then God reveals Himself to you in the full light of His veritable essence. He appears to you at once as the best of Fathers and the Sovereign Master of all things.

You will recognise His *rights*, rights unlimited over all the faculties of your mind and body, over all that you possess, your life, your being. But these rights are of goodness as well as of justice. You will serve God by love still more than by fear. And the inspirations of love are unbounded. It will no longer be a question of how little you can do, but of how much. You will no longer try to isolate God in your life, to confine Him to a short prayer morning and night, to a low mass on Sunday. You will no longer say : " My interests, my affairs, and my pleasures come first." You will say : " God first of all, God before all, God first in all things." God will become the centre of your life, the beginning and end of all for you. You will understand the beautiful words of the poor man of Assise : "*Deus meus et Omnia*" (My God and my All), and you also will wish to make it the emblem of your life and of your works.

By the light of faith, all that concerns God will become clear.

Prayer will no longer be merely an attitude, a mechanical movement of the lips to be hurried through or avoided.

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Prayer will be an essential act, thoughtful and earnest, the indispensable homage of the creature to its Creator, the joyful submission of a son to his father.

Prayer will be a continual need—of the intelligence which seeks for light, of the will which feels its weakness, of the heart which longs to love.

Sunday mass will no longer seem an obligation to be endured, a matter of form which you dare not omit, a wearisome moment always too long.

Mass will be the pre-eminent act of religion, the commemoration of all God's blessings, the ever-present, ever-renewed pledge of His inexhaustible love, the moment longed for, when your soul will be filled with all the treasures of grace and Divine life.

Absolute silence, profound recollection, and most perfect respect in thought and in bearing will be prompted by love still more than by fear of the hidden God, who is present as He is in Heaven, and to the eyes of faith almost visible.

Communion will cease to be the annual formality, which comes ever too soon and is ever deferred, and finally accomplished because needs must ; which makes no change in your life, its confusion or its vices.

Communion will be the unfailing tryst of the Divine love : Jesus Christ giving Himself in his unique Person and double nature ; giving Himself without reserve, and without measure, save the limitations of the heart which receives Him. Communion will be for you the sovereign gift, the supreme blessing, which you cannot too greatly desire nor try to deserve. Love will

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incessantly urge you to the Divine banquet, and joined by respect will make you ready, and send you thither with all the requisite dispositions.

You will not seek in Communion sensible fervour and human emotions. Faith will tell you that it is better to possess the God of Consolations than to *feel* the consolations of God. Faith will teach you to find peace and calm in communion, and an increase of strength, of light, of love, of virtue, which are worth more than all sensible joys.

And, finally, confession will no longer be made to a man, but to God. All hesitation, all confusion, all reserves and half-avowals, all false contrition will disappear forever, to make way for perfect sincerity and solid repentance inspired more by love than by fear.

To sum up : in your acts of religion, whatever they be, faith will ever be present to show you by means of its radiant light God Himself, in His glory, Master, Father, Creator, and Redeemer, the Sovereign King and the faithful, incomparable Friend. You will not divide justice from goodness, nor fear from love. You will see God as He is, and you will be to Him that which you should be. Thanks to the spirit of faith, all will be illumined and transformed in your relations with God.

All will likewise be illumined and transformed in your relations with God's *creatures*.

Your neighbour will no longer be an enemy, a rival, a competitor ; no longer the troublesome disagreeable creature so hard to endure—a creature, alas ! sometimes sharing your life, and who should be most dear.

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No, you will no longer see your neighbour in himself, with all his natural faults and deformities, his eccentricities and passions, his vices and scandals, his desires and interests which clash with your own, his evil qualities, his sins and all that displeases and repels, all that makes life so painful. No, by the spirit of faith you will see him in God, in Jesus Christ. You will see his immortal nature made in the likeness of God, the reflection of His love and His goodness ; you will see his soul redeemed by Jesus Christ, his very flesh sanctified by grace, and finally his whole being in which God is concealed, as the sun is concealed behind a cloud which it reddens with its rays.

You will hear, resounding in your ears, the Divine words : " Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me." *

Thus illumined by faith your neighbour will be transformed in your sight. The mask will fall that you may see God appear in His handiwork. Your neighbour will no longer be this one or that ; he will be Jesus Christ.†

You will see Jesus Christ in your superiors, that you may give them the same respect and obedience as you would Him ; you will see Jesus Christ in your equals, that you may love them as Himself, in your inferiors, that you may direct them gently and with kindness ; in all the members of your family, your relations, your wives, your children, that you may love them with a higher love, which will not be

* *Quamdiu fecistis uni ex his fratribus meis minimis, mihi fecistis.*—*St. Matt.* xxx. 40.

† Pascal, " *Pensées.*"

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changeable as are the caprices of nature, subject to the instabilities of character, fleeting as the pleasures of the senses, short-lived as beauty, at the mercy of the selfishness and discords which suddenly arise and often divide those whom the bonds of flesh and blood should most closely unite.

Perceiving Jesus Christ in all souls, your love being purified, your happiness transformed, you will soar above all these miserable dissensions which destroy the strongest of unions and wreck family life.

You will see Jesus Christ in the poor and the sick, Jesus Christ suffering and destitute, who calls to you to relieve His poverty and distress. You will no longer give alms just to free yourself from troublesome applications, but with a good will. You will no longer visit the unfortunate because you feel forced to, and to be rid of a wearisome philanthropic duty. You will go freely, spontaneously. You will go, not with a love made up of pity and compassion, which stoops toward inferior beings, but with a love which rises toward creatures who in the sight of God are superior to you, a love full of humility and adoration for Jesus Christ present in them.

You will see Jesus Christ living in the just that you may be further edified by their example ; Jesus Christ in sinners, who have crucified Him within themselves ; and by your prayers and your zeal you will strive to take Him down from His Cross, and to bring Him to life in their souls.

The spirit of faith will illumine *you yourselves*, and will transform you in your own eyes.

Faith will tell you that you are at once miserable and sublime, poor and rich. Poor

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in your nature called forth from nothingness, miserable in your weakness, your passions, your sins ; sublime by all that God has put in you of His love, His wisdom, His power, rich in all the graces and blessings which He has bestowed upon you.

Faith will inspire you on the one hand with a deep humility—and an absolute distrust of yourselves, because you can do nothing without God ; and on the other hand with a limitless confidence in the Divine assistance, and a courage proof against all trials.

Faith will illumine *all things* in your sight.

It will show you the true *end of life*, not to be found in pleasure, wealth, or success, but in the salvation of your soul by virtue and the practice of righteousness. The “one thing needful” of the Gospel will appear to you with startling lucidity, and those who do not make it their incessant preoccupation will seem to you madmen.

You will see *sin* as the supreme evil, the sovereign evil, the unique evil. You will comprehend its ugliness, its enormity, its atrocity. You will a hundred times prefer death, poverty, and suffering to the sin which separates you from God.

Temptation will no longer appear to you as an obstacle to your salvation, but as a means of testing your love and increasing your merit. You will say with the Scriptures : *Beatus vir qui suffert tentationem, quoniam, cum probatus fuerit accipiet coronam vite, quam repromisit Deus diligentibus se.**

* Blessed is the man that endureth temptation ; for when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life, which God hath promised to them that love him.—*St. James i. 12.*

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Without desiring temptation, which would be presumption and temerity, you will not fear it ; and, sure of the Divine assistance, you will joyfully accept it, as a soldier flies into battle to win his spurs.

Suffering in all its forms will no longer dismay you, nor will it ever discourage you. Faith will illumine sorrow for you. It will enable you to see therein the necessary remedy for sin ; and the condition of your salvation, the expiation, the redemption of your faults, the revival of your soul, you will find merit, and the continuation in you of the sacrifice on Calvary for the benefit of guilty humanity.

Faith will illumine for you all the problems of life, the most delicate, the most troublesome, the most painful. It will not dispel all shadows here on earth ; the time is not yet come. And as shadows in this world give value to the most perfect landscapes, so the shadows which faith leaves render more beautiful the light which it brings.

The spirit of faith makes clear even the obscurities of faith, in showing you the motives for them : they are that you may recognise your limitations and the bounds of your intelligence and offer to God the sacrifice of your reason, in humbling it before His.

Faith will finally illumine the whole of nature with the most brilliant light. How beautiful nature is for the artist, the painter, the poet ! Behind the visible he discovers that which the eye cannot see, the ideal, and in admirable figures he conceives sublime thoughts, noble sentiments, wonderful fancies which he despairs of ever being able to incarnate upon canvas or in verse.

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Who can tell what a Raphael, a Michel Angelo, a Shakespeare, a Victor Hugo, a Lamartine has seen of the splendours of nature ?

And yet a Francis of Assisi surpassed them all. Steeped in the knowledge of the Gospel, he recalled the use which the Divine Master made of nature, and the admirable comparisons which He drew therefrom. He remembered that Jesus Christ had chosen to call Himself the light, the stone, the way, the water, the vine, the grain of wheat, the bread . . . and his marvellous imagination bore him away on wings of fire.

He outstripped men of genius in his flight to the sublime regions of light and love ; he soared upward to the inaccessible summits of the Divine. His enraptured soul contemplated God Himself in the masterpieces of His creation.

Ah, if you would but ask of your faith this vision of God in nature !

If your faith but revealed to you the uncreated within the created, and caused to shine before your eyes that beauty which lives forever within the beauty which fades !

Yes, there is nothing here below which the spirit of faith does not illumine and marvellously transform in the eyes of the believer. If you but realised this truth !

During the last Paris exposition crowds rushed headlong to the Palace of Light. They stood in line to enter, huddled together ; within the luminous enclosure they were packed to stifling. They cried aloud their surprise and admiration !

But what is such a pale and fleeting show, aimless and of no avail, beside the incomparable

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and immortal light which faith sheds upon each creature, and upon the Creator Himself.

Ah, if you only understood, if you but knew how to will !

But this is not all : the spirit of faith works still further marvels. I will relate them in a few words.

The spirit of faith facilitates all things. Indeed, for him who sees all in the fair light of God all becomes easy. When the sun shines, when nature is resplendent, the traveller marches gaily and all exertion seems trifling.

So it is in the paths of virtue. When the mind is enlightened the will grows vigorous and active. Light is converted into heat and force. Moreover, nothing can stop him who walks in the light of faith. For him no difficulty is too great, no obstacle insurmountable. He has the strength to accomplish every duty, to support all suffering, to bear every trial.

In the presence of the most formidable temptations and the most powerful inclinations toward evil, which would be the downfall of many, he remains unshaken, like those trees which you find in the mountains, leaning over unfathomable depths, overhanging some precipice, but attached to the soil by powerful roots. His faith attaches him to God with so great a force that he will never fall into the depths of sin.

With faith all dangers become harmless. " They shall take up serpents : and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them." *

With faith all burdens are lightened. We no

* *Serpentes tollent et si mortiferum qui biberint non sis nocebit.*—*St. Mark* xvi. 18.

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longer loiter ; we run, we fly ; we no longer feel pain or fatigue ; all that is hard becomes easy, for faith tempers and confirms the will as fire tempers iron and changes it into steel.

Another marvel : the spirit of faith beautifies all things. The warm light which strengthens the will dilates and gladdens the heart, and fills it with an unparalleled joy and peace, " the peace of God," says the Apostle, " which passeth all understanding." And like mountain peaks, continuing beneath the calm of a fair sky, whilst the storm rages in the valley, so he who has succeeded in attaining to the loftier regions of faith will find himself lifted above all human vicissitudes. All that troubles, discourages, dismays a soul without faith will leave him untouched.

He is always in the midst of peace and calm. He finds sweet that which is bitter to others ; and the Beatitudes of the Gospel are to him living realities, of which he feels the full value.

In poverty, in sorrow, in chastity, in suffering, in trial and in persecution, in all that appals and distresses human nature, he finds a pure happiness and a celestial joy, which the world is powerless to take from him : *gaudium vestrum nemo tollet a vobis*.*

Still another marvel : the spirit of faith sanctifies all !

Holiness is the aim of the believer, and his faith leads him thither by the shortest path. Holiness consists in pleasing God in all things ; and to please Him always one must always desire to do so. " If thy eye be single, thy whole

* And your joy no man shall take from you.—*St. John* xvi. 22.

body will be lightsome." * that is, if your intention is pure all your actions are holy. It is because it insures purity of intention that the spirit of faith sanctifies all our works. Referring all things to God, directing his thoughts, his words, his deeds to God, the true believer, if he is logical with himself, is necessarily holy.

As the sun penetrates the diamond, causing it to give forth a blaze of light, so the spirit of faith penetrates a soul, a life, making it beautiful in God's sight. Without the spirit of faith this soul, this life would be as a diamond in the dark, a hard substance merely, quite without beauty, because it no longer has light.

Yet another marvel, the completion and necessary conclusion to all the others : the spirit of faith obtains all things. It obtains all things of God by prayer. The Gospel is precise upon this point. The promises made concerning prayer are express and infallible. Jesus Christ has confirmed them by solemn declaration. " If you ask the Father anything in my name, He will give it you." † " For amen I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, you shall say to this mountain, Remove from hence hither, and it shall remove : and nothing shall be impossible to you." ‡

You hear : " If ye have faith " ! It is the condition of the promise of Jesus Christ and of the success of prayer. Our Lord has shown us

* *St. Luke* xi. 34.

† Si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.—*St. John* xvi. 23.

‡ Amen quippe dico vobis : si habueritis fidem sicut granum sinapis diceris moriti huic : transi hinc illuc et transibil ; et nihil impossibile erit vobis.—*St. Matt.* xvii. 19.

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this most clearly, for he worked the greater part of His miracles in order to reward the faith of those who had recourse to Him.

The spirit of faith obtains all things because it asks in the name of Jesus Christ, because it asks all that is good, useful, and holy, all that is in conformity with the will of God ; because, finally, it binds the soul so firmly and closely to God that it causes it to participate in the very power of God.

And yet a final marvel : the spirit of faith unifies all things !

What need we have of union ! It is the indispensable condition of victory.

And how divided we are by ideas, tendencies, judgments, opinions, parties, and interests. What superior force will unite us in action for the salvation of our country ? Faith. Only faith can triumph over so many dissensions, and obtain from each one the necessary sacrifices, so that there shall be but " one flock and one Shepherd " : *unum ovile et unus pastor*.

What would you have, what could you further desire ? The transcendent superiority and the beneficent influence of the true believer, of the " just man who lives by faith " will now appear to you in a most vivid light.

There are three sorts of greatness, or, to put it more clearly, there are three successive regions each one of which dominates that preceding it from its superior level. The region of sensible perceptions, which is the lowest, is overlooked by the region of rational knowledge, which in turn is surpassed by the region of moral and religious truths. Now, as superiority consists in reaching the highest point possible, all those

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who remain in the region of the senses, those even who do not go beyond purely rational truths, will never attain to true superiority.

I go still further : they are not *men* in the full sense of the word, for they remain outside the law of man, which, as we have seen, is inevitably faith.

The sceptic is a man unfinished, atrophied, lacking. As the plant in unfavourable conditions fades and dies, so man without faith lives but a dull, incomplete, inferior life. How can he fully develop ? for he is living outside his law ; he is a poor, unfortunate being whom we must pity and assist to the full extent of our charity. But if he makes a profession of his incredulity, if he boasts of it, above all, if he seeks to propagate it and use it as a stepping-stone for his greed or his ambition, then he becomes a public offender and the greater his strength and intelligence the more he is to be feared. He sows injustice, immorality, and ruin on every side.

We must not cease to care for his soul, which remains immortal, and may be healed so long as it is in this world ; but we must use all our power to resist him, to prevent him from demoralising the people, from dechristianising the nation, and to wrench from him the soul of our country which he is trying to destroy.

Incredulity is always a misfortune, a discredit, an inferiority ; but when it spreads it becomes a social scourge.

The believer, on the contrary, when logical with himself, when true to his faith, follows his law and reaches his full development, his full dignity. He does not confine himself to earth,

to the region of the senses, but rises above it.

Like the grain of wheat *—the comparison is used in the Gospel—which dies in the earth in order to come forth into the air and light, which yields a hundredfold and so becomes the sustenance of man, so also must the believer pass by death—a death which is but apparent.

It is the unbeliever who truly dies ; seeking to save his own life, the material life of the senses, he remains buried as in a sepulchre, in the region of the flesh, the lowest of all.

The believer dies only to live again. He is resuscitated ; he does not stifle and suppress his life ; he exchanges it for a better. He puts off the old man, the material man. He leaves the earth, to mount as high as Heaven, to ascend in the light of God to the most lofty regions.

And whither will he not rise ? He traverses the region of the mind, the region of personal and individual reason, narrow and limited, the region of prejudices and of systems. He passes beyond the region of universal reason, that of human reason in all its strength and uprightness. He continues rising ever higher.

He reaches the regions of moral thought, of virtue, of religion, which alone are worthy to be called superior, where the light grows purer, warmer, and more penetrating. He revels there, but tarries not, as ever on his way he rises higher in these sublime regions, beyond which naught exists but the radiance of glory and the beatific vision.

And the higher he ascends the more “ just ” he becomes, according to the words of the

* *St. John* xii. 21.

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Apostle, because, entering more and more fully into the plan of the Creator, he adjusts himself as it were to all the wishes of God, and conforms day by day more fully to His good pleasure.

Faith gives him superiority as well as righteousness, because faith reveals to man his law and his destiny, sets him in his place in this world, and enables him to accomplish his mission here below. Faith unites him to God, and makes him live the life of God : *justus ex fide vivit*.

The believer who is true to his faith is the righteous man, the perfect man, because he lives according to God, and submits and surrenders his mind, his will, his heart, his whole soul to faith ; he lives in God because he acquiesces in all the wishes of God, who desires to live and reign in him.

But he must not keep this righteousness to himself. He must share it with others, he must communicate it, propagate it for the greatest advantage of all about him. He is not only upright, but, contrary to the unbeliever, he becomes beneficent.

Oh, may each one of you become this just man who lives by faith ! and may the lamentable events which have of late years been unfolding themselves before your eyes give you a yet keener desire, a more pressing need of justice and faith.

Incredulity and injustice have joined hands ; they have united to destroy all that is left of belief and virtue. They have triumphed, they have contemned, proscribed, despoiled. They have laid hands upon secular institutions, sacred pacts, and intangible rights. Their rage for

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destruction and ruin, far from abating, has only grown bolder with success.

In the face of triumphant injustice and incredulity let us oppose the noble and encouraging spectacle of justice united to faith, a sincere and generous faith which, going to all lengths, produces perfect justice ; let us oppose the sight, in itself a benefit, of the upright man living by faith.

Remember that if unjust and bitter incredulity is our destruction, the justice born of faith and love will be our salvation, for justice is the only solid foundation of nations : *justitia elevat gentem* ;* and justice itself is founded upon faith : *justus ex fide vivit* !

Remember the power of justice, of righteousness over the heart of God, and over the destinies of a people, since God demanded but ten just men to save a whole city of the guilty.

Preserve your faith, then, cultivate it, develop it, exercise it, practise it, let it become active in all your thoughts, words, and deeds. Let it be pure, whole, generous, effective, let it become finally the spirit, the soul of your life ; and thanks to you let the number be multiplied of those just men and believers who, by their sacrifices and prayers, their virtues and their merits, weigh down the Divine balance on the side of mercy, and thereby save their country.

* Righteousness exalteth a nation.—*Prov.* xiv. 34.

VI

JESUS CHRIST AUTHOR AND FINISHER OF FAITH

Aspicientes in auctorem fidei et consummatorem Jesum (Looking on Jesus the Author and Finisher of faith).—*Epistle to the Hebrews* xii. 2.

IT is in these terms that the Apostle describes our Lord Jesus Christ, and invites us to contemplate Him. He calls Him the Author and Finisher of faith. Do you grasp the depth, the comprehensiveness, the sublimity of these two words ?

Jesus Christ is first of all the *Author* of faith : auctorem fidei. Author signifies creator. Thus one says the author of a book, a doctrine, a discovery. Jesus is therefore the Creator and Founder, the Source and Principle of faith. Even before the coming of Jesus Christ into this world, after the fall of our first parents, there was no faith save by Him and in Him. Immediately after the sin He was announced and promised as the Redeemer and Saviour. It was in Him that the patriarchs hoped, and the prophets and all the righteous of the ancient world. St. Paul passes them in review, in a long chapter, and shows that it was by faith in Him that they worked prodigies, justified themselves, and saved their souls.* The Scriptures call Him the "Desired of nations."

* *Epistle to the Hebrews* xi.

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Since His advent upon Earth faith has grown more luminous, more accurate, and has increased. It has taken from Him, by means of Him, all its plenitude and strength.

Faith is belief in the Word of God, that is to say, in Jesus Christ, whom St. John calls "the Eternal Word of God": *in principio erat verbum, et verbum erat apud Deum et Deus erat verbum.** After having spoken by the prophets, *olim Deus loquens patribus in prophetis,†* Jesus was made flesh, *verbum caro factum est,‡* in order that He Himself might speak with a still higher authority, and forever establish faith upon an unshakable foundation.

He is the Author of faith because he deigned to become man that He might teach us with His own lips all that we should believe: *erudiens nos . . . aperiens os suum docebat eos. §*

He has taught us the whole truth, all that His Father charged Him to teach us. ||

He has left us the Gospel, the immortal code of our faith. He has instituted the Church that it might speak in His name; He has promised it His aid even until the end of time, to ensure the integrity and indefectibility of its doctrine.

Aspicientes! Look unto Him! Look unto Him in the prophets and the Scriptures, in Himself, in His Gospel and His Church!

* In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.—*St. John* i. 1.

† *Epistle to the Hebrews* i. 1.

‡ *St. John* i. 14.

§ And opening His mouth He taught them saying.—*St. Matt.* v. 2.

|| *Omnia quaecumque audiui a Patre meo nota feci vobis.*—*St. John* xv. 19.

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Oh, what need you have to look long, to contemplate Him attentively, to fix upon Him your eyes, your mind, your heart, your whole soul, that you may understand Him, that your faith may be what it should !

How many make themselves a faith of their own sort ! Their Creed is an affair made up of the doctrines of men, rather than of those of God. It is formed of remnants and scraps. Their faith, like the garments of the poor, is composed of rags and tatters whose faded colours clash with one another. A mournful Creed, a distorted faith, a faith perverted, and which no longer retains anything of its Author.

Look then unto your Master ! You have but one : unus est enim magister vester.* Place yourself at His feet, humbly and obediently, and receive from Him your faith and your Creed, without altering a single article, without discarding the smallest item. Receive the Creed both in spirit and in letter, in the integrity and plenitude of its meaning. Do not clothe yourself in borrowed rags, " but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ " : induimini Dominum Jesum Christum.†

Your faith is attacked from every side. Innumerable are the enemies which assail it. Philosophy and science, history and criticism, rationalism, and free thought, all strive to destroy or pervert it.

Error disguises itself, shams, and hides itself under the semblance of progress or liberalism. It sometimes creeps even into the sanctuary and the priesthood ; it wears a cassock, to strike

* *St. Matt.* xxiii. 8.

† *Epistle to the Romans* xiii. 14.

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you the more unexpectedly, and to still further dismay you : et sermo eorum ut cancer serpit.*

Be on your guard ! Depositum custodi, devitans profanas vocum novitates. †

Look more attentively than ever unto the Author of faith ! Aspicientes auctorem fidei !

In Him you will see faith living and acting, for all that He teaches you He commenced by practising : cœpit facere et docere. ‡

He does not resemble those speakers and leaders who abuse the credulity of the masses, who themselves do nothing, and often do not even believe what they say, for they speak only to gratify their passions or their interests.

He is your Leader. He has gone to the front without sparing Himself. He "has *done* the Truth" while speaking it. In Him, as in an untarnished mirror, you may contemplate at leisure the doctrine of your faith in all its splendour. His Word tells His virtues, and His virtues incarnate His word.

Look unto Him ! His Divine examples will enrapture and persuade you ; He himself will sustain you. Author of your faith, He will confirm you in it. He will aid you to perform and to practise what He teaches you, to order your life and works in harmony with your belief.

He will preserve your faith in all its integrity, in all its purity ; and if ever it receives an injury by the way, a glance towards Him will immedi-

* And their speech spreadeth like a canker.—*Second Epistle to Timothy* ii. 17.

† Keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding the profane novelties of words.—*First Epistle to Timothy* vi. 20.

‡ Acts i. 1.

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ately heal you, as a glance at the serpent of bronze which Moses raised upon a cross healed the Hebrews who were bitten by the "serpents with tongues of fire." *Aspicientes in auctorem fidei !*

Et consummatorem Jesus. He is not only the Author of your faith, but also the *Finisher*.

If He were but the Author you might be fearful and discouraged. Faith makes you aim so high ! Is it not inaccessible ? It makes such wonderful promises. Can they ever be realised ? It reveals such treasures. Will they one day be yours ?

No, if left to yourselves, with but your own abilities to rely on ; for all would be beyond you, far above your strength and your merits, and faith would be disheartening were Jesus but its Author. But He is the *Finisher* of faith : *ipse perficiet solidabitque.**

He will make up for your weakness by His merits. He will supplement your poverty by His riches. He will veil by His grace your distress and destitution. In Him you can do all things. Through Him you will reach that lofty and transcendent destiny whose existence He has revealed to you. Through Him you will attain to that vision face to face of which faith is but the beginning and the origin. Through Him you will possess that beatitude of which Scripture tells us : that the eye of man hath not seen, nor his ear heard, nor can his heart ever conceive of anything approaching the unparalleled felicity which God reserves for His elect. Author of faith, Jesus is also

* He will Himself perfect you, and confirm you.—*First Epistle to St. Peter* v. 10.

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its Finisher, because He will realise all its promises and will give you all its benefits.

Ah, what gratitude do you not owe to Him ! You should be grateful to the authors of your mortal days, to the father and mother who have given you the life of this earth. What gratitude then is not due to the Author of your faith, the Author of the supernatural life of your soul, the Author of that everlasting day whose light shall never cease !

You honour genius, you bow before the authors of great discoveries, of masterpieces, of brilliant victories which have added to the glory of whole nations. You render them homage, raise statues to them, deify them. What then should you not do for the Author and Finisher of your faith.

Faith is the masterpiece of creation, since it raises man above all other creatures and deifies him. Faith surpasses all the discoveries of the perishable riches of this world, since it reveals and announces to us, and at the same time promises to us, the possession of the riches which are everlasting.

Faith far outstrips the most brilliant victories, the most dazzling triumphs, for it is the victory over ourselves, over our passions, our pleasures, our ambitions, our interests, the victory over the world and all the creatures in it, *hæc est victoria quæ vincit mundum fides nostra*.

The day will come when the most magnificent discoveries, the most wonderful masterpieces, the most heroic victories of this world will be useless to us. All will disappear, all will relapse into nothingness. The heavens and the earth will pass away, but the rewards of faith are

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everlasting. The promises of faith are eternal ; the riches it brings immortal. None can rob us of them, and their splendour will be ever unsurpassed.

The heroes and great men whom we honour are full of weaknesses, faults, and imperfections. The Author and Finisher of our faith is immaculate, without weakness, without imperfection.

He is the " very image and the glory of the substance " of His Father. What gratitude and confidence, what love and fidelity will you not feel for Him ? *Aspicientes !* Look unto Him ! Look unto Him with the eyes of faith, with the eyes of the heart, the eyes of the soul ! Cease not to contemplate Him, to admire Him, to praise and exalt Him ?

Look unto Him concealed in all creation, in every creature. *Omnia per ipsum facta sunt et sine ipso factum est nihil quod factum est.** He resides in each being, in every substance ; the eyes of faith will find Him there.

Look unto Him in His Gospel, in His Church, in His ministers, in His sacraments ; there you will find Him, for there He lives.

Look unto Him in His holy humanity, that humanity which He took upon Him in the womb of the Virgin Mary, in which He became like unto you, even as your brother.

Look unto Him in the Sacrament of His permanent abode, in the Eucharist, which the Church calls " mystery of faith " ; for He is there as in Heaven, single in person and dual in nature. It is there that He would have your

* All things were made by Him ; and without Him was made nothing that was made.—*St. John* i. 3.

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faith seek Him out, discover and acknowledge Him; there He already rewards your faith. He surrenders Himself to you as fully as you yourself desire, and He gives you in this sacrament His grace, His life, His love, and all His treasures.

Adore Him, thank Him, love Him beneath the veil of the Host! Promise Him obedience, swear inviolable fidelity to His word. Submit to Him without reserve, and forever, all the faculties of your soul, all the senses of your body, your whole life, your works, all that is yours and all that is subject to you.

Ask of Him, finally, that He will realise for you all of His promises, that He will sustain your faith, increase it, and render it more sincere and more active. Ask of Him that, having adored, loved, and served Him beneath the veils of the Sacrament, and in the obscurity of the mysteries of this world, in the hour of its release, your soul, freed from all veils, and from all mysteries, may go to contemplate Him face to face, and find beatitude in the eternal vision of His glory

Jesu quem velatum nunc aspicio,
Oro fiat illud quod tam sitio,
Ut, te revelatâ cernens facie,
Visu sim beatus tuæ gloriæ! *

Amen.

* Office of the Feast of the Blessed Sacrament, hymn of St. Thomas.

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